Chronicles

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Tea Party Animals

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Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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Corporate Rights

Tom Piatak's contrarian view of the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision ("Obama *Versus* the Supreme Court," *Vital Signs*, May) is convincing and well stated. It is useful, however, to realize why conservative headline readers, those who probably did not peruse the actual decision or Justice Stevens' dissent, are likely to think it a good ruling. A 501(c)(4) nonprofit corporation whose *raison d'etre* is political speech finds itself denied, during the critical 30 days before a Democratic presidential primary election, the ability to advertise and distribute a film criticizing a major candidate. That's an injustice, and, on its face, it seems a violation of the First Amendment.

But what started out as a limited First Amendment case turned into something far more sweeping. A majority of the Supreme Court—the four conservatives and swing voter Justice Kennedy—transformed the case into an opportunity to declare virtually unlimited freedom for corporations to spend money on any political issue.

Corporate personhood is the term for treating corporations like natural persons. Freedom of speech, which in the First Amendment is manifestly designated for individuals only (excepting one kind of business, the press) was long ago extended by the Supreme Court, with qualifications, to businesses in general. The justifications usually included an observation that businesses are owned by, run by, and employ natural persons who enjoy First Amendment rights.

But if such reasoning is a *non sequitur*, it is particularly difficult to understand why corporations today deserve the privileges of citizens. Unlike the earliest corporations (*e.g.*, the East India Company), which were chartered by their country to do some of its financially risky and often dangerous work and whose shareholders had to put the good of their country ahead of personal wealth and corporate profit, today's corporations exist solely to create wealth for their upper echelons and shareholders.

Very large corporations—think Fortune 500—also have astonishing powers and advantages over citizens: not just potential immortality and limited liability but vast wealth exceeding that of all but a tiny number of men; multinational identity; and no built-in moral constraints, just those dictated by law or public opinion. Do corporations also merit freedom of speech, or the unregulated ability to spend money influencing political decisions (which is in the Supreme Court's view a version of speech)?

Complexities enter the picture when one considers American nonprofits that organize themselves as corporations—Citizens United, for example—and small, closely held businesses. One can make a reasonable case for exempting them from speech regulation. Justice Stevens endorsed gradualism over revolution. He noted in his long dissent that the Court's majority could have decided *Citizens United* narrowly to reverse an injustice against like organizations but chose instead to make a sweeping and dramatic rearrangement of the political power relationship between businesses and individual citizens.

As Mr. Piatak says, "It is hard to see how genuine conservatives benefit from removing limits on corporate political expenditures." I agree but would add that liberals, with their characteristic suspicion of business and its motives, are unlikely to see a benefit, either. Like the 2005 *Kelo* ruling, which dramatically expanded local government powers of eminent domain, the *Citizens United* decision should disturb thoughtful people.

G.L. Gould
Ithaca, NY.

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The Rockford Institute

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Arizona's Got Sand

by Roger D. McGrath

On October 26, 1881, a gunfight erupted in a vacant lot on Fremont Street in Tombstone, Arizona, that would go down in history as the Shootout at the OK Corral. Virgil, Wyatt, and Morgan Earp and Doc Holliday stood on one side, and Tom and Frank McLaury and Ike and Billy Clanton on the other. Guns blazed. Men fell, dead or wounded. There is controversy aplenty surrounding the deadly affray, but one thing is clear: Those standing their ground and firing their guns had sand. Most men in the Old West—and women, too—had sand. If they did not, they would have stayed in the East. The territory of Arizona was inhabited by those with pluck and grit.

It seems that the state of Arizona is still inhabited by the same types.

One of those is Russell Pearce, an Arizona state senator from Mesa. Before entering the political arena, he served for 35 years as a sheriff's deputy with Maricopa County. He rose through the ranks to deputy sheriff, was shot in the chest while on duty, and was awarded the Medal of Valor. I first wrote about Pearce in *Immigration and the American Future* (Chronicles Press, 2007). He was responsible for drafting Proposition 200, the ballot initiative known as Protect Arizona Now, a relatively mild reform that merely required people to produce proof of citizenship when registering to vote and when applying for public benefits. It also made it a misdemeanor for public officials to fail to report noncitizens who apply for welfare. Opposition to the proposition came from all the usual suspects, including not only several Hispanic groups but the Arizona Republican Party, the Arizona Democratic Party, Sen. John McCain, Gov. Janet Napolitano, several business organizations, and the AFL-CIO. Despite factional discord and personal conflicts among the supporters of the proposition, it passed with 56 percent of the vote in November 2004—and won 47 percent of the Latino vote.

In April 2006 Pearce was one of the driving forces in the state legislature behind a bill that criminalized the presence of illegal aliens in Arizona by expanding the state's trespassing law to allow local authorities to arrest them anywhere in the state. Napolitano, who had won the governorship with 45 percent of the vote in 2002, vetoed the bill, saying that immigration arrests should remain a federal responsibility. Calling Napolitano the worst governor in the nation on immigration issues, Pearce continued to lead the fight against illegals, later saying,

> I believe in the rule of law. . . . We're a nation of laws. I will not back off until we solve the problem of this illegal invasion. Invaders, that's what they are. Invaders on the American sovereignty and it can't be tolerated.

With Napolitano as governor, though, a veto of all Pearce-sponsored legislation was a *fait accompli*. President Obama did Arizona a favor when he appointed her secretary of homeland security.

Back in Arizona this meant that Secretary of State Jan Brewer, a Republican with a very conservative record, first as a state senator from Glendale and later as the chairman of the Maricopa Board of Supervisors, became governor. Pearce went to work immediately, drafting and introducing Arizona Senate Bill 1070, the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act. Anticipating legal challenges from the ACLU and other left-wing and Hispanic organizations, Pearce enlisted the aid of Kris Kobach, a professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. A 44-year-old constitutional scholar, Kobach graduated *summa cum laude* from Harvard, then earned a Ph.D. from Oxford and a J.D. from Yale Law School, where he was editor of the *Yale Law Journal*. By the time he had finished his formal education he had written two books. In 2001, President Bush awarded him a White House Fellowship to work for Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft. When his fellowship ended, Kobach was retained as counsel to the attorney general. Following the attacks of September 11 Kobach led the team of attorneys and scholars who formulated and established the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System and also worked in reforming the Board of Immigration Appeals.

As an attorney Kobach has been involved in several lawsuits over issues concerning illegal aliens, including an Arizona case in which construction contractors and Hispanic organizations attempted to enjoin a state law that imposed penalties on employers who knowingly hired illegal aliens. He has been verbally attacked and called names by such groups as the Southern Poverty Law Center, a distinction that several of us at *Chronicles* share. I cannot imagine anyone more talented, qualified, or experienced in the legal issues surrounding illegal aliens than Kris Kobach.

In April SB1070 breezed through the legislature, although on a strict party-line vote: All Republicans in the Arizona House of Representatives voted for it, and all Democrats against it; in the state senate all Republicans save one were for it, and all Democrats save two (who did not vote) were against it. Governor Brewer, who could have wilted under pressure from Washington and from Mexico City and vetoed it, or

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cravenly allowed it to become law without her signature, showed sand, saying,

> The bill I'm about to sign into law—Senate Bill 1070—represents another tool for our state to use as we work to solve a crisis we did not create and the federal government has refused to fix—the crisis caused by illegal immigration and Arizona's porous border.

Senator Pearce called Brewer's signing "a good day for America."

The act does nothing more than support federal immigration law by requiring aliens to carry documents of their legal status or be charged with a misdemeanor. It also requires law-enforcement officers in Arizona to make an attempt, "when practicable," to determine a person's immigration status if there is reasonable suspicion that the person is an illegal alien. Citizens should have no fear of being harassed. A person is presumed to be lawfully present in the United States if he has any one of several types of identification, including a valid driver's license, a valid nonoperating identification license, a valid tribal enrollment card, and any valid federal-, state-, or local-government-issued identification that provides proof of legal residence. Moreover, an amendment to the law, House Bill 2162, specifically states that police may only investigate immigration status when incident to a "lawful stop, detention, or arrest" and that the investigation cannot be based on "race, color, or national origin."

Nonetheless, the left's reaction has been typically hysterical. The Los Angeles City Council voted 13-1 to boycott Arizona businesses and prohibits most city business trips to the state unless SB1070 is repealed. Councilman Paul Koretz, who said he lost relatives in the holocaust, likened the actions of Arizona lawmakers to those of the Nazis on the eve of World War II, declaring, "We can't let this advance any further. It is absolutely dangerous." The city council's action is mostly symbolic. Los Angeles has investments and contracts in Arizona worth some $58 million, but legally more than $50 million of that cannot be touched.

Gary Pierce responded to Los Angeles's boycott with alacrity and sand. An elected commissioner on the Arizona Corporation Commission—Arizona's version of a public-utilities commission—Pierce noted that Arizona supplies 25 percent of the electrical power consumed in Los Angeles. He made this abundantly clear to Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and remarked,

> If an economic boycott is truly what you desire, I will be happy to encourage Arizona utilities to renegotiate your power agreements so Los Angeles no longer receives any power from Arizona-based generation. I am confident that Arizona's utilities would be happy to take those electrons off your hands.

Villaraigosa and several councilmen huffed and puffed but clearly did not have the courage of their convictions and were unwilling to have brownouts in a brown city.

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom suspended all "non-essential" travel for city employees to Arizona, which meant only that members of the city's housing authority would not hold a conference in Scottsdale. That raises the question of why they were going to Arizona in the first place. Despite large budget deficits, junkets at taxpayers' expense to out-of-state resorts evidently remain fashionable. Businessmen in San Francisco began warning Newsom about a possible backlash. "Would Arizona and other states that are more conservative than San Francisco retaliate and stop sending conventions to San Francisco?" wondered Kevin Westlye of the Golden Gate Restaurant Association. "Certainly in a recession, we don't want any retaliation." Fearing such, Newsom formed an "Arizona Boycott Workgroup" to consider the ramifications of an Arizona boycott.

The city council of San Diego voted to "oppose" Arizona's law, but what that means is unclear. When Arizonans began canceling trips to San Diego, officials in the seaside city began saying their opposition was merely symbolic. Joe Terzi, president of the San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau, said the city could ill afford the loss of any of the two million Arizonans who annually vacation there. "We're in a very tough environment already because of everything else going on," declared Terzi, "and we don't need another negative impact to our industry."

Several lawsuits have been filed against Arizona's law, including one supported by the ACLU, NAACP, and MALDEF (the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund). "This is the most extreme and dangerous of all the state and local laws purporting to deal with immigration issues," said Lucas Guttentag, an ACLU attorney. "This law is shameful, un-American. It will undermine public safety and it is unconstitutional." The Obama administration is also contemplating a legal challenge, although at this writing—more than a month after SB1070 was enacted—U.S. Atty. Gen. Eric Holder has not even read the law.

Standing their ground like gunfighters of old, Jan Brewer, Russell Pearce, and others in Arizona are unmoved by the opposition. Polls reveal that 60-70 percent of Americans support the Arizona law, and more than a dozen other states are now considering adopting similar laws. In an effort to slow the momentum, President Obama suddenly announced that he is sending 1,200 National Guardsmen to aid the Border Patrol. Let's hope this cynical attempt at manipulating the American people into a somnifacient apathy is met with the ridicule it deserves and that other states show Arizona that they, too, have got sand. ◆

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Frankly, Ma'am

YOU KNOW someone is old enough to remember, let's say, the Kennedy assassination when he shudders as some lout on TV giggles out a laugh-line that substitutes *ass* for the body part known in quainter times as the *derrière* or the *behind*. Without a beg-your-pardon, ma'am.

It's a wonderful new age, to be sure—one marked by seemingly total freedom and latitude for expression. All those bluenosed inhibitions we used to feel about words we weren't supposed to utter in polite company—gone! As, I guess, may be the case also with polite company. Why be polite if no one understands you're being polite when you scrub and perfume your manner of expression? Says a *New York Times* headline from late spring: "Bleep or No Bleep, Bolder Words Blow In." The substance of the story is that advertisers feel super-motivated to engage us customers. To compliment us all, whatever our chronologies, as if we all sported tattoos and 28-inch waistlines.

"Ads for Ford trucks, Keystone light beer and Summer's Eve feminine hygiene products," the *Times*' story says, "use colloquial expression for manliness that are focused on the testicles. A nickname for that body part, along with another essential element of a man, is repeated in video clips for a body groomer sold under the Wilkinson Sword Quattro Titanium brand name."

The Kennedy-assassination-remembering crowd is capable of recalling as well the half-startled, half-pleased murmur that even in 1961 escaped the packed houses watching the return of *Gone With the Wind* when Mr. Clark Gable informed Miss Vivien Leigh that, as to caring what she did henceforth, he frankly didn't give a damn. We'd be lucky if in a remake he didn't add, "bitch."

Which—forgive me, ma'am—is as far as I'm going today with Modern Frankness, given my own premodern predispositions. On the other hand, something has to be said about what gets said while generally escaping rebuke or expostulation, if we're to judge by television and the internet.

We are all invited to think of the ongoing crude-ification of America as a concomitant of the now mostly accomplished liberation of America from, you know, worn-out norms, priggish restraints, dead-white-male assumptions, and so on.

A free-swinging country like America was destined never to be any ivory copy of Tuileries *jeunesse dorée*, *c.* 1780. Not that that's the point. Americans have never before given up on the courtesy thing, intuiting that the daily courtesies human beings offer one another—including restraint in expressions likely to offend—lubricate life's comings and goings. Consideration for others is the meaning of manners, including those others who don't get their jollies rolling in the vernacular mud as one entreats another, "Hey, look what's on TV tonight—*Dance Your Ass Off*!"

So much for previous understandings of *ought* and *oughtn't*. We're natural today. We're loose. We're free. Pretty good copies, at times, of the "trousered apes" whose emergence among us C.S. Lewis memorably foresaw.

Oh, mutter, mutter, mutter. We all know what it sounds like when decrepit old-timers get to mourning the loss of Lucky Strikes and Fibber McGee's closet. It sounds damned—excuse me one last time, ma'am—depressing.

Mourning the loss of restraint in expression isn't in that league. It's bigger. To aim low, as opposed to high, is generally to hit the target. One need only crumple to the ground. That's what we want? The locker room/barnyard style of English discourse made general and spread among us? We can have it. We might even deserve it, assuming somebody doesn't—here's where this is going, maybe—start taking sponsors apart in retribution for their helping spread pollution, linguistic and moral alike.

The big expediter of language loosening is, of course, television, where moral standards march in step with economic aspirations. The looseners will one of these days hit a roadblock and pull back—likely well before we find Joel Osteen or Oprah entertaining audiences with *$#$@#$ this* and *%$# that* (to borrow from the old comic-book formulation for imagined swear words). At that, *Dance Your Ass Off* is about as low as many hope, or fear, to sink.

—*William Murchison*

Last Action Hero

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER marched into the *Orange County Register*'s lobby wearing cowboy boots and confidence. He was mobbed in the lobby by women who wanted him and men who wanted to be him. He cheerfully signed autographs. He then came up to our offices to meet the editorial board.

The celluloid dream became a physical reality for the hour of his interview. It was 2002, and Schwarzenegger was promoting a boutique ballot initiative for a new spending program: $450 million per year for after-school programs for kids, so they could have a chance like he did to enter sports such as bodybuilding. He promised our editorial board that no new taxes would be needed, because the new program would reduce juvenile crime, and so help the state economy while lowering police and court expenses. It was a practice campaign for his run for governor the next year.

Fast-forward to 2009, and that $450 million had to be paid with part of the record $13 billion in tax increases the governor signed into law.

Like that 2002 campaign, everything about Arnold is a celluloid illusion, even more than it was for JFK or Reagan. In his movie *Last Action Hero*, the image of Arnold is conflated with the real Arnold, as a young boy and Arnold move back and forth across the screen between the mov-

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ie and "reality."

It's a synthetic example that could come from the pages of Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*, published in English in 1994, one year after *Last Action Hero* appeared. Baudrillard writes, "The universe, and all of us, have entered live into simulation, into the malefic, not even malefic, indifferent, sphere of deterrence: in a bizarre fashion, nihilism has been entirely realized no longer through destruction, but through simulation and deterrence."

From the beginning, Arnold has molded his image and career like a piece of Silly Putty. He transported himself to America from Austria in the midst of four times being crowned Mr. Universe. The titles were for bodybuilding, a made-up sport that, like the Miss Universe pageant, includes preening in skimpy swimsuits before judges, but without the talent contest. Arnold won this and other competitions by injecting himself with copious steroids, then legal. The "real" Arnold Alois Schwarzenegger was replaced with the simulated Arnold *via* a berserker pumping-iron-and-needles regimen.

After switching to movies, he became the authentic-simulated action hero and top international box-office draw from the mid-80's to early 90's. Along the way he schmoozed with free-market economist Milton Friedman and married into the American Habsburgs, the Kennedy-Shrivers, straddling both sides of the political pit.

Baudrillard writes of "the desert of the real," a phrase made popular by the 1999 movie *The Matrix*, in which reality and simulation are blurred as they were in many of Arnold's early flicks.

Just as Arnold's film career was flaming out, in 2003 California voters recalled pathetic, hesitant, panicked Gov. Gray Davis. Arnold ran in the replacement election, promising to "terminate" the state's budget deficits and "blow up the boxes" of waste in state government.

Californians didn't vote for Arnold, but for the Terminator, Conan the Barbarian, John Matrix, Dutch, Ben Richards, Capt. Ivan Danko, Jack Slater, U.S. Marshal John "The Eraser" Kruger, and Mr. Freeze. He—or they—won easily.

Even though the former Mr. Universe's misfeasance and malfeasance have brought record state deficits that make Greece look frugal, outside of California he remains the Last Action Hero. People I speak with across America still think it's not his fault. How could the Terminator go wrong? I argue with them, in my editorial-writer's way. But they have a point. It isn't Arnold's fault, because there is no Arnold.

In January, he will leave his California office to go global, becoming EPA secretary or U.N. environment representative, or taking some other post associated with his malefic obsession with the unreality of global warming.

Welcome to the Desert of the Arnold.

—*John C. Seiler, Jr.*

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Murder by Leftism

In early May, four people lost their lives when rioters set fire to a bank in downtown Athens, then prevented rescue workers from reaching the facility. Those deaths serve as a warning by leftists and anarchists that anyone who dares to work during a declared strike will lose his life. At the time of this writing, the killers are still at large, perhaps an indication of the unwillingness of the socialist government to arrest and prosecute them.

Of course, their arrest would tarnish the left's image and uncover the unholy alliance between the government and the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary left in liberalizing social relations. If among the killers there were immigrants, as witnesses and police suggest, there would be an uproar against the new naturalization law. As the November municipal elections are approaching, the government's political dilemmas continue to grow.

On May 5, during a mass antigovernment demonstration, anarchists and left-wing activists noticed that people were working at Marfin Bank, which was in their path. They broke the glass of the branch office with sledgehammers and threw flammable liquids and Molotov cocktails inside. Then they cheered as the bank employees were burned alive. One of the victims was a young woman who was four months pregnant.

The cause of the demonstration was the new "austerity measures" imposed on Greece by the troika (the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Central Bank), in response to skyrocketing debt.

Greece's debt is now undermining all capital markets around the world, threatening a domino effect on the economies of the West. Though the French and the Germans initially disagreed, the European Union ultimately decided that a rescue package of €110 billion (roughly $140 bil-

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lion) will be granted by the troika over a three-year period in order to save the country from bankruptcy.

Social-democratic policies have ruined Greece. Now, a socialist government in Athens is, under the guidance of the U.S.-born president of the Socialist International, George Papandreou (an advocate of global governance), applying neoliberal policies to prevent bankruptcy.

PASOK, the ruling socialist party of Greece, has always been a vehicle used by local financial interests to pass their "reactionary" (to use a progressive term) agenda. Now PASOK is being used by the IMF (and Goldman Sachs) to subjugate the Greek economy. And Greece is not the only target. As the weak link in the eurozone, Greece has become the launching pad for an attack of the international hedge funds on the euro.

At present, Portugal, Spain, and Italy look particularly vulnerable, with their governments trying to ward off speculators. That will prove a rather difficult task. Dogmatic devotion to the free flow of capital and distaste for government intervention have drastically weakened the national defenses of the E.U. states. A crisis in one state immediately affects the rest.

Whenever Greece has a critical political battle to fight, violence and terrorism take the field. Anarchists and left-wing extremists, taking advantage of university asylum, turn demonstrations into skirmishes with riot police, then hide on university campuses. With the silent approval of the left-leaning intelligentsia, these people engage in military-style operations, attacking the police and burning stores, government facilities, and cars. Of course, they claim they are attacking the "ruling class," but it is obvious that their actions are a benefit to the government, disorienting citizens, who might otherwise be outraged at its socialist policies.

The murder of those four people, and the terrorist attacks that followed, are the strongest indications that Greece is heading toward catastrophe. Such a catastrophe can still be prevented, if the citizens are willing to blast the socialist government at the municipal polls in November.

—Nikos Hidiroglou

Obiter Dicta

Our poet this month is **Eric Sellin**, a retired literature professor who lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His recent poetry publications include *Ombres de mon soleil* (2006) and *Plainsong: The Islands* (2009).

Our cover photo is provided by **Joy McCarnan**. The former assistant director of The Rockford Institute's Center for the Restoration of Humane Learning, Miss McCarnan teaches English at The Literacy Council in Rockford, Illinois.

The cover photo features *Chronicles*' former art director **H. Ward Sterett**.

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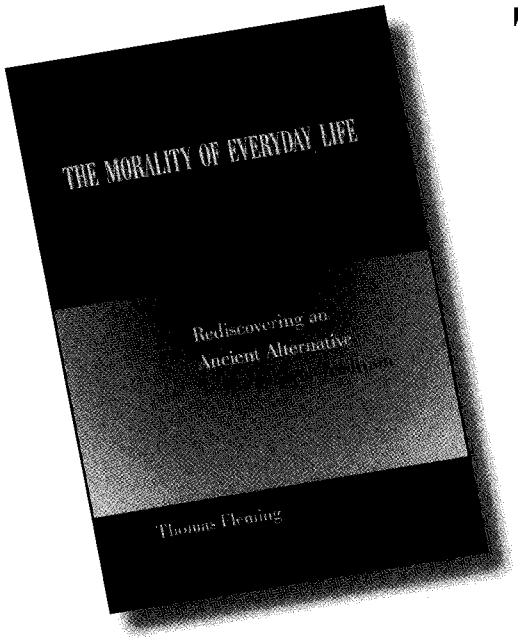

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Lighting a Candle

MANY AMERICANS say they are fed up with their government, that "the time is right for a palace revolution." President Obama's approval rating has sunk below 40 percent, and the voters are angry not so much with the administration as with all incumbents. But why would anyone pay attention to opinion polls? All polls are to some extent push-polls—that is, they are designed as much to create as to report public opinion. Opinion polls are the end result of the inevitable slide of democracy into demagoguery and tyranny. No one is easier to enslave than the proverbial average guy, if he can be persuaded to think that he has a right to his own opinion. In fact, the average American is incapable of forming his own opinion.

The manipulation, or rather invention, of public opinion is not an exclusively leftist phenomenon. Conservatives have their own talking points and plenty of pretty young talking heads to recite the daily agitprop. Much of what I hear on the radio is a kind of patriotic mythology packaged as American history. If the left demonizes the American past as an age of bigotry and repression, conservative pundits portray it as a golden age of individual liberty. In other words, they take the leftist language of liberation and read it backward, hawking the Constitution as if it were "Hope in a Bottle." For the radio hustlers, all the Founding Fathers were fine Christians and great men, including the atheist Tom Paine, the Freemason whoremaster Ben Franklin, and the deists Thomas Jefferson and John Adams.

Most conservative strategies are mere exercises in nostalgia. If only we could go back to the principles of Ronald Reagan, to the halcyon days of the Greatest Generation, to the glory days of the American founding! Like utopian leftists, they think "we've got to get ourselves back to the Garden," before the snake entered into the American Paradise and corrupted it.

For conservatives, perhaps the most popular form of the nostalgia strategy is the cry of the Tea Party demonstrators to defend the Constitution. Waving their tea bags—loose tea is far too messy—they appeal to the Declaration, Constitution, and Bill of Rights as if they were Holy Writ. The fundamental flaw is their ignorance even of what a constitution is. A constitution is not a document; it is the fundamental set of legal and political arrangements by which a society is governed. Most constitutions in history were not actually written down in one document, and when they are written down the ink is scarcely dry before powerful men begin amending or reinterpreting them. The very first piece of business in our first Congress was Madison's proposal of a Bill of Rights, and it was only 14 years later that John Marshall staged his judicial *coup d'état* in *Marbury* v. *Madison*, usurping a power of judicial review that had never been granted by the Constitution. Today, our real Constitution has virtually nothing in common with the system we had in 1890, much less the Constitution of 1787, and nothing short of a victorious rebellion could restore us to the constitutional *status quo* of 1960.

But all this constitutional nostalgia makes us feel good without requiring any effort, much less any risk. The original Boston Tea Party was a bold move by men who for years had been plotting rebellion against the most powerful empire in the world. At Lexington and Concord, Yankee farmers would stand up to British regulars and fight for their independence. The original Boston Patriots knew what they were fighting for, and it was not a Super Bowl title. No matter how many millions they pay Sarah Palin to read a speech someone has written for her, Tea Partiers, with their symbolic gestures and rhetorical tirades, will accomplish exactly nothing, because they have no clear grasp of fundamental principles and no practical agenda. For those who can read, Rand Paul's change of heart on the Civil Rights Act was the handwriting on the wall: "the Party's over."

Nearly all populist movements in America follow a certain trajectory. A large and identifiable class of people is harmed by the arrogant and corrupt government. Meetings are held, declarations are signed, the two parties are challenged or infiltrated. Once upon a time, populists almost won major elections or at least terrified the establishment—Bryan in 1896, La Follette and Wheeler in 1924, George Wallace in 1968. These were mass movements led by able and patriotic leaders, but they all fizzled, either because good times eliminated the issues that drew together the motley followings, or because the major parties succeeded in demonizing the opposition (Bryan's fate), or because one or another party stole their thunder. Nixon's Southern strategy was nothing less than a campaign to steal the Wallace vote.

No populist movement has ever managed to keep the match and the dynamite together long enough to cause a se-

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rious explosion, the match being a coherent set of principles and the dynamite being the outrage of the disenfranchised taxpaying citizens. You can always tell that a movement is not serious when it concentrates its efforts on declarations and symbolic gestures. The Continental Congress had already resolved on revolution when it set up a committee to draft a Declaration of Independence designed to appeal to English and European liberals. Today, our rebels start with a declaration and end with a fundraising appeal. Religious conservatives have passed a meaningless Manhattan Declaration, arthritic Reaganites have their Mount Vernon Statement, and the irrepressible Newt Gingrich is ready to take out another contract. But all these charters and contracts, declarations and tea parties are at best a distraction.

We are in a struggle for the soul of our country, and we cannot win if we do not fight, and we cannot fight successfully if we do not know what we are fighting for or who the enemy is, and we cannot know who the enemy is or what we should fight for unless we know who we are. If there is an American nation, it is not a mere set of geographical boundaries or a paper constitution that is turned on its head by the president and the federal courts. America is a people with shared experiences that stretch back to our British and European ancestors, to the philosophers and poets of ancient Greece and to the soldiers and lawmakers of Rome and to the prophets of ancient Israel. It is only by recovering our heritage that we can know fully who we are and transmit that self-knowledge to our friends and children. And knowing who we are, we can understand that our enemies are those who hate our religion, our traditions, our history, our morals, our culture.

Our future, the future of our children and their children and their children's children, is not in the hands of unassimilated aliens like Barack Obama and Nancy Pelosi. Pelosi is a third-generation Italian-American, but she is completely devoid of the virtues of her rugged Abruzzese ancestors and filled with hate for any of the virtues and traditions that made our country possible. No, our future is in our hands, and it takes a period of crisis such as the one we are experiencing to shake us out of our lethargy and shatter our stupid faith in the failed institutions that have betrayed us: the Republican Party, mainline churches, public education, the media elite, Hollywood, and the so-called conservative movement that in the past 50 years has accomplished exactly nothing—or less than nothing—and now serves as the echo chamber that gives legitimacy to every stupid leftist project launched by our enemies.

Of course it makes some difference which set of crooks we send to the state capital or to Washington, but no politician is going to make our lives better. That is up to us and to our friends and neighbors. Americans have always been a people who knew how to take care of themselves. They grew their own gardens and shot their own meat; they got together to raise barns and make quilts, to play music and organize dances. On the frontier they often had to make their own justice. If we once decide to ignore the latest schemes promoted by talk-radio shills like Glenn Beck and Sean Hannity, if we work within our homes and parishes and with private and religious schools, we cannot fix the country as a whole, but we can rear decent children, enjoy life, and preserve our little corners of American civilization.

This is already happening, all over the country, and groups like *Chronicles* and The Rockford Institute serve both to help these little communities to educate themselves and to bring them together into networks in which they can help each other. There is too much to do for us to waste any more time worrying about the Democrats or the liberals. We can morally secede from the Marxist mainstream. If we do not like what they teach in public schools, then by all means let us vote to defund them and either send our children to private schools or keep them at home. If you do not approve of the filth shown on TV and in the movies, why waste time on protests when you can either turn off all electronic media or learn to use them? Our television now only works as a movie screen on which we watch operas, plays, and old movies. Paradoxically, technological innovations, while a very mixed blessing, provide us with valuable tools we can use to secure some bit of independence from the anti-Christian media. We can now order the films and books we want, and we can even download classics we may not yet be able to afford to buy. There are dangers in all these media: Too many films, even if they are the best films ever made, distract us from things we can do ourselves, just as listening to too much recorded music can interfere with our progress in mastering an instrument. The internet, while it gives us access to books and information, is also dominated by lies, filth, and inconsequential chatter.

Italian communists have a saying: "*Tanto peggio, tanto meglio*," meaning the worse it gets, the better it is for the revolution. Acting on their slogan, they did evil in the expectation of good results. Partisans killed German soldiers knowing that the German response would create sympathy for the resistance. This was an entirely cynical and immoral strategy, but the truth is that it is during periods of crisis and dissolution that a significant number of men and women wake up from the slumbers into which they have been lulled by greed and cowardice. As I suggested a few months ago, a Dark Age is what you make of it. If this be treason, then let us make the most of it. ♦

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Joy McCarnan

The Tea Party: A Mixed Bag

by W. James Antle III

In January, when Republican Scott Brown was elected to fill the remainder of the late senator Edward M. Kennedy's term, the activists who helped make it possible traced their political lineage back to the Boston Tea Party. Jubilant supporters dubbed it the "Scott heard round the world."

This Tea Party wanted to dump into the harbor a plan to expand the federal government's role in healthcare, and its main enemy was not King George III but President Barack Obama. True to his mission, Scott Brown cast the 41st vote against the healthcare-reform act. The legislation that was supposed to be the culmination of Ted Kennedy's career was rejected by voters deep in the heart of Kennedy country.

What came next was anything but revolutionary, however. The Democrats were stunned by Brown's election but decided to press forward. The healthcare bill passed in spite of Brown's vote.

In retrospect, the Tea Party movement's first electoral triumph does not seem like much of a breakthrough. What they got was a senator who was conservative by Massachusetts standards—surely, Leverett Saltonstall is spinning in his grave—but fairly moderate when compared with his colleagues on the national scale. Brown later denied that the Tea Party activists had much to do with his campaign's success, and he declined to address their rally in Boston. But the loose coalition of protesters and political agitators who profess to be outraged by the federal leviathan's size, cost, and indebtedness has the potential to be a significant conservative force in American politics.

For one thing, the people who identify with the Tea Party represent the biggest mass-protest movement of the right in the postwar era. It is often said that political demonstrations are a liberal's game because conservatives are too busy with jobs and families. Even on issues that span the ideological spectrum, like globalization or war, the big protests are overwhelmingly left-wing affairs.

Conservatives have had their protests before. Dedicated pro-lifers have long picketed and prayed outside abortion clinics. *Freerepublic.com* used to encourage "Freepers" to

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carry signs and chant slogans. During the Clinton years, Republican activists handed out fortune cookies reminding people of the President's shady Chinese fundraising practices. But this is the first time in recent memory that state capitals across the country have been filled by demonstrators associated with causes of the right.

Another promising sign: The tax revolts of the 1970's and 80's that led to Proposition 13 in California and Proposition 2½ in Massachusetts, among other tax-limiting ballot initiatives, were fueled by objections to paying for big government. The Tea Partiers aim their fire at big government itself. Their protests really got going after the bailouts and hit the national radar during the debate over the $787 billion stimulus package.

All this happened before any broad-based tax increase was signed into law. To be sure, the Tea Partiers do not want to pay high tax bills, especially to finance the lifestyles of others. But while Reagan-era tax protesters were willing to run deficits in order to see their taxes go down, the Tea Party activists understand that high spending and borrowing will have to be paid for eventually.

Rhetorically, many Tea Party supporters engage in a far more radical critique of the American state than that embraced by the mainstream conservative movement. In most contemporary conservative rhetoric, the country went to hell in a handcart in the 1960's. A few crusty old fogies point the finger at FDR's New Deal in the 1930's. Inspired in part by television and radio commentator Glenn Beck, the Tea Partiers trace the republic's decline to the "progressives" who began trashing the Constitution under Woodrow Wilson.

Mainstream conservatives since the Goldwater campaign in 1964 have had little use for constitutionalism, but it is important to the Tea Party movement, and today, the mainstream right is starting to catch up. In February, a group of Beltway conservatives met in Virginia to issue the Mount Vernon Statement, which emphasized enumerated powers and constitutionally limited government rather than the latest findings of some conservative think tank white paper.

Signs at Tea Party protests express such unfashionable sentiments as "Your mortgage is not my problem." It is not uncommon to see people dressed up as their favorite Founding Father or wearing powdered wigs and Revolutionary War-era garb. Even liberalism's most cherished taboos are tweaked. A placard spotted at one Tea Party event in the nation's capital read, "It doesn't matter what this says, you are going to say it is racist anyway."

Liberals have predictably greeted the Tea Party with a mixture of derision, scorn, and terror. While deeming their own right to protest Republican governments sacrosanct, any similar sentiment from the right smacks of antigovernment "extremism" and Timothy McVeigh-style terrorism. And, because the President whose policies they protest is black, they are considered irredeemably racist. Some liberal commentary treats the Tea Party like the second coming of the storm troopers or a revivified Ku Klux Klan.

The convictions that animate the Tea Party could lead to a more authentic conservatism. The Tea Party could also represent the biggest political opportunity yet for a renewed Middle American Radicalism.

"The angry faces at Tea Party rallies are eerily familiar," wrote columnist Colbert King in the *Washington Post*.

> They resemble faces of protesters lining the street at the University of Alabama in 1956 as Autherine Lucy, the school's first black student, bravely tried to walk to class. . . . Those were the faces I saw at a David Duke rally in Metairie, La., in 1991: sullen with resentment, wallowing in victimhood, then exploding with yells of excitement as the ex-Klansman and Republican gubernatorial candidate spewed vitriolic white-power rhetoric.

Tea Party protestors are rumored to have spit on congressmen and hurled racial epithets, but the evidence is rather thin. They "disrupt" town-hall meetings by asking their congressmen annoying questions about the government programs they are supposed to finance docilely through their tax dollars. Their ranks are replete with people who believe Obama was born in Kenya, who want the government to get its hands off their Medicare, and who probably drive pickup trucks.

Yet the Tea Party movement is not as radical as liberals fear or as conservatives hope. Once the powdered wigs are put away, it is not even clear how different they are from the average Republican voter. A *New York Times*/CBS News

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poll found that 57 percent of them had a favorable view of big-spending president George W. Bush, and 62 percent believe popular middle-class entitlements like Social Security and Medicare are "worth the cost."

On the other hand, the same poll found that 92 percent of Tea Party voters want a smaller government that offers fewer services, and only 6 percent trust Washington usually to do what is right. (Not a single respondent picked "always.") The problem is the disconnect between their convictions and their practical political involvement: They expect unconventional things from fairly conventional Republican politicians.

Consider Scott Brown. While Brown's election did not stop the healthcare legislation, it did endanger that bill in two ways: It restored the Senate Republicans' ability to filibuster without Democratic defections, and it powerfully demonstrated that Democrats voted yes at their peril. But the Democrats used the reconciliation process to get around the first obstacle and decided simply to ignore the second. At that point, it was only a matter of how many Democrats were willing to risk their necks for the President's agenda.

More than enough to make ObamaCare the law of the land, as it turned out. Now the Tea Party is left with a senator who is pro-choice, supported Mitt Romney's Obama-like Massachusetts healthcare plan, voted against auditing the Federal Reserve, favors expansive war powers, and has rehired some of Kennedy's immigration-policy staffers. This does not amount to a radical defense of liberty, and Brown will face a better-prepared Massachusetts Democratic Party in just two years.

At least the Scott Brown gambit had the potential to work, and it is possible that an even more intrusive healthcare-reform law would have been passed, had Brown lost the election. Other Tea Party political interventions are inexplicable. To the extent that the movement has any stated goals, opposing bailouts like the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) and repealing ObamaCare would seem to be high on the list. To do either, they will face opposition from both parties.

Repealing ObamaCare will require Republicans to take political risks as great as those taken by Democrats to pass it in the first place, something Republicans are only willing to do when it comes to prolonging unpopular foreign wars. They will have to break Democratic filibusters, override presidential vetoes, use the expedited reconciliation process, and refuse to fund the implementation of the new law—all without any guarantee of success.

Yet, according to a SurveyUSA poll taken in Indiana shortly before the May primary for the U.S. Senate, likely voters who identified with the Tea Party movement broke 30 percent for former senator Dan Coats, 23 percent for state senator Marlin Stutzman, and 21 percent for former congressman John Hostettler. Coats, a "compassionate conservative" during his first stint in the Senate, had just returned to Indiana at the behest of Washington Republicans after lobbying on behalf of TARP recipients, the pharmaceutical industry that spent liberally to pass ObamaCare, and companies that stand to benefit from cap and trade.

Hostettler, by contrast, had a consistent record of opposing big government regardless of whether it was being promoted by Republicans or Democrats. He had voted against the 1996 budget deal to end the government shutdown, the unconstitutional Violence Against Women Act, No Child Left Behind, the Medicare prescription-drug benefit, and the Iraq war. Hostettler also opposed TARP.

Based on these records (campaign promises aside), which candidate seemed more likely to be willing to do what it takes to get rid of ObamaCare and stand athwart future bailouts? Not the one preferred by most Tea Party activists. Those too pure to support a lobbyist for big government went for Stutzman because he was a "Washington outsider," even though he was a former congressional staffer whose campaign was heavily funded by the Beltway right.

Tea Party favorite Stutzman's parting shot the weekend before the primary was to send out an e-mail telling his supporters that Hostettler "is in agreement with Ron Paul's view of Israel and the Jews," whatever that means. "In his book," the missive continues, "Hostettler contends that President George W. Bush depended on intelligence provided by what Hostettler has called 'neoconservatives with Jewish backgrounds.'" In fact, this was a quote from David Aiken, an author who is hostile to neither Jews nor neoconservatives. Hostettler's book was mainly about how he correctly assessed the intelligence concerning WMDs in Iraq before the war.

On the other hand, Tea Party activists in Kentucky strongly supported Rand Paul for the Republican senatorial nomination despite GOP hawks working overtime to smear both him and his father on foreign policy. After belatedly noticing that the younger Paul was beating the Republican-establishment candidate by double digits in all the public polls, the neoconservatives played the September 11 card until it was dog-eared.

"Trey Grayson is the candidate in this race who will make the right decisions necessary to keep America safe and prevent more attacks on our homeland," former New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani said in his statement endorsing Paul's opponent. "He is not part of the 'blame

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America first' crowd that wants to bestow the rights of U.S. citizens on terrorists and point fingers at America for somehow causing 9/11."

Former vice president Dick Cheney also weighed in, declaring Grayson "right on the issues that matter"—presumably war, torture, and executive power. "I'm a lifelong conservative, and I can tell the real thing when I see it," Cheney continued.

> The challenges posed by radical Islam and Al Qaeda are real and will be an on-going threat to our domestic security for years to come. We need Senators who truly understand this and who will work to strengthen our commitment to a strong national defense and to whom this is not just a political game.

In March, the call went out from neocon central. Former Cheney aide Cesar Conda fired off a worried e-mail to leading hawks: "On foreign policy, [Global War on Terror], Gitmo, Afghanistan, Rand Paul is NOT one of us." Conda's recipient list included William Kristol, Liz Cheney, Dan Senor, Marc Thiessen, and Robert Kagan.

But Tea Partiers stuck behind Paul, the self-described "constitutional conservative," as the candidate who opposed bailouts, a reckless monetary policy, and runaway federal spending. Rand Paul won the endorsement of Sarah Palin, Steve Forbes, Sen. Jim DeMint, and the man he was vying to replace, Sen. Jim Bunning. The most embarrassing setback for the party establishment, however, came when social-conservative leader James Dobson rescinded his endorsement of Grayson and threw his support to Paul.

Dobson openly said that Republican apparatchiks lied to him about Paul's position on abortion and other social issues. "Senior members of the GOP told me Dr. Paul is pro-choice and that he opposes many conservative perspectives, so I endorsed his opponent," Dobson explained. "But now I've received further information from OB/GYNs in Kentucky whom I trust, and from interviewing the candidate himself." He called his initial support for Grayson an "embarrassing mistake."

A revealing poll for *Politico* found that Tea Party members who attended the April 15 protest on the National Mall were split into roughly two camps: one that identified more with the consistent antistatism of Ron Paul, and another consonant with the conventional Republicanism of Sarah Palin. Palin and the elder Paul were the top two choices when the pollsters asked which political figure "best exemplifies the goals of the Tea Party movement." They were also the attendees' top two choices for president, with Palin taking 15 percent, and Paul 14.

This divide is imprecise but instructive. The Tea Party movement is driven by the sense that something distinctive about this country and its political inheritance is being lost. They see its government swelling to European proportions, its values as being alien to their own traditions, and its economic future as suddenly bleak. There is an immigration-driven demographic component to these concerns, mocked by *New York Times* columnist Charles Blow as "anachronistic" because Tea Partiers are "disproportionately white, evangelical Christian." But much of it has to do with the kind of government they are getting.

Today, the Tea Party resembles nothing so much as a Facebook-using version of the early conservative movement, before the neoconservatives—but just as susceptible to a neocon takeover.

Some Tea Party sympathizers have recognized these trends for years under both of the major political parties. For them, Obama is simply the last straw. Others have been jolted into action by the suddenness with which Obama has been able to take George W. Bush's fiscal irresponsibility to new levels. And for others the only problem is that a Democrat is imposing what they consider "socialism" on the country. They were happy with Bush and would be pleased to see Republican socialism return, perhaps as soon as the next election cycle.

The convictions that animate the Tea Party could lead to a more authentic conservatism. The Tea Party could also represent the biggest political opportunity yet for a renewed Middle American Radicalism. Or it could be exploited by jingoes, FOX News marketing researchers, and the Republican National Committee, as rage channeled into the indiscriminate election of GOP candidates.

Today, the Tea Party resembles nothing so much as a Facebook-using version of the early conservative movement, before the neoconservatives—but just as susceptible to a neocon takeover.

W. James Antle III is associate editor of The American Spectator.

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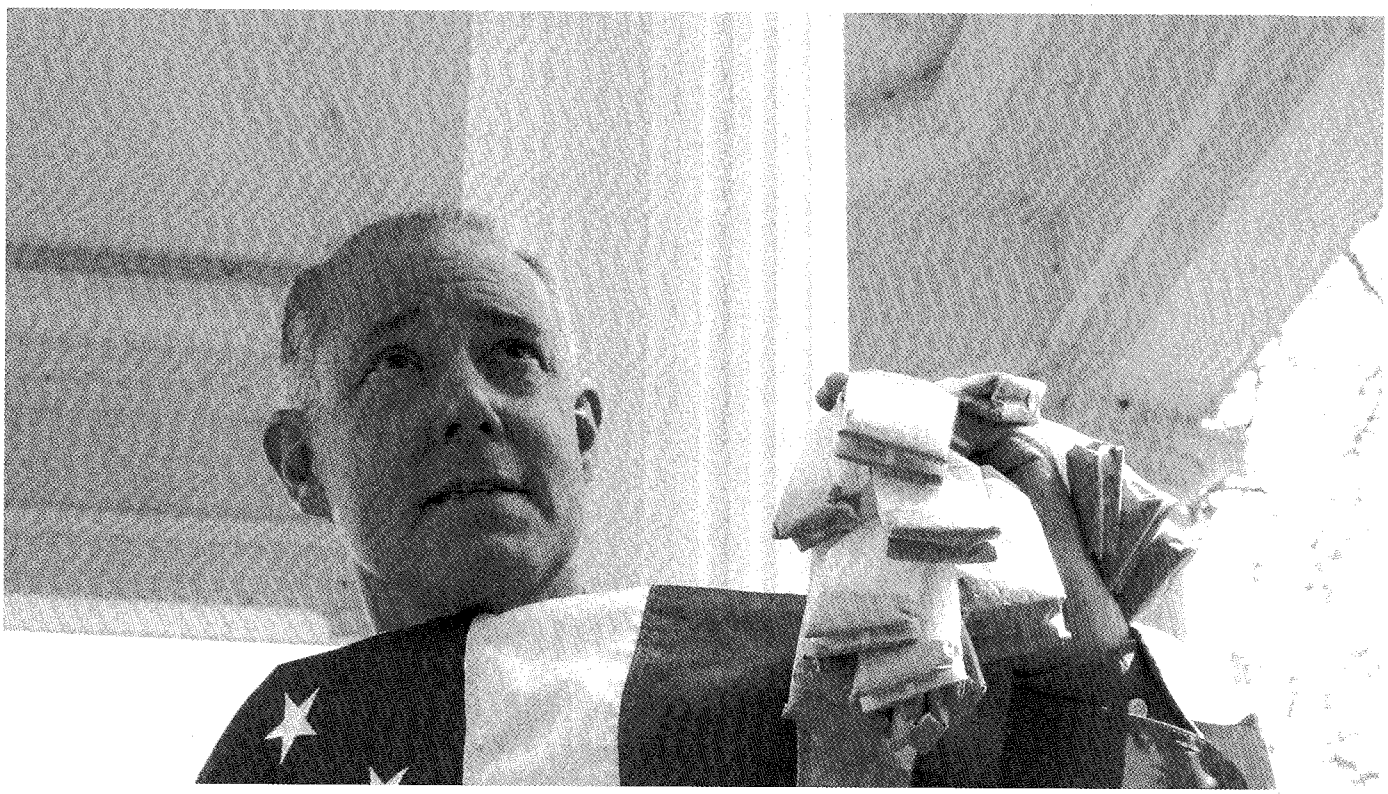

Joy McCaman

The New American Mob

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

AFTER 16 MONTHS, perhaps the best one can say for the Tea Party is that the contempt it originally provoked within the American establishment has turned to consternation. If the Tea Party were composed of real Indians, the elite would be understanding, if not exactly encouraging, and not in the least alarmed or offended. Since, however, the modern Tea Partiers are only white people got up in paint and feathers, the American ruling class finds itself compelled, by its own prejudices, neuroses, and—it may be—fears, to recognize a potentially dangerous threat.

Over the past three months the Tea Party has broadened the scope of its protest, in particular with regard to immigration, an issue that it had previously taken care to avoid. Before the passage in April of SB1070 by the Arizona state legislature, which makes it a state crime to be in the country illegally and requires police officers to check the immigration status of suspicious persons, the Tea Party had focused its attention largely on taxation. Two decades ago George Will, the Beltway's idea of a "conservative" columnist, loftily dismissed tax complaints by asserting that Americans, in comparison with the citizens of European countries, in fact are undertaxed. That was priggish of him, but taxes, though onerous and unfair, are really not the most pressing evil the American citizenry needs to resist. Since SB1070, the Tea Party has loudly defended Arizona's action, while simultaneously attacking and deriding the state's eminently attackable and derisive critics, who have so far succeeded only in exposing themselves as ideologues marching under the slogan ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION NOW, ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION FOREVER. More directly, the Tea Party has played an active role in a number of political primaries, and in one of them it enjoyed a glorious victory by bearing home the scalp of Republican Sen. Robert Bennett of Utah, an instructive example of a Republican-pseudo, from a party delegates' vote. (Bennett, reflecting the long-standing position of the Mormon church, always eager to import converts from abroad, is a strong partisan of immigration "reform.") In general, the Tea Party's success in the prima-

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ries had been mixed before Rand Paul won the Republican primary in Kentucky, but no one denies that the Tea Party has been effective in pushing the Republican Party distinctly rightward. It is a relatively small, loosely organized, mobile, and very active force that has shown itself capable of pulling off harassing raids, a modern political version of Gen. Bedford Forrest's Critter Company. Unfortunately, what is needed in the long run is the equivalent of the Army of the Confederacy, commanded by a latter-day General Lee. (Many historians, of course, consider Forrest to have been the greatest military genius of the War Between the States, while Lee and his army were ultimately defeated, though only after a protracted and nationally devastating war.)

The Tea Party, whatever its influence at present and no matter what its future may be, probably has less importance as a political agent than as a sign of the times, and perhaps even a bellwether. Something in America has changed since the election and inauguration of President Barack Obama, and the Tea Party is a symptom of that change. The first and most obvious cause is the fact of the United States having elected her first mulatto president since the founding of the Republic more than two centuries ago. The issue is less the President's blackness than the alien quality his color, fairly or unfairly, gives him. One need not be "racist" to respond to newspaper photographs and film footage of Obama, standing behind a podium bearing the presidential seal, with feelings of simple incredulity. (Even George W. Bush, immediately after the election, confessed he had never expected he would live to see a black man in the White House.) For such incredulity, Obama is hardly to blame. He is, however, entirely blamable for his inability, or perhaps his refusal, to foresee the likelihood—indeed, the inevitability—of such a reaction on the part of the white majority population, and therefore for his failure to make account for it. No doubt, that failure is thanks in large part to his own self-bamboozlement, and to the self-delusion of his entourage, allowing the Obama campaign to fall for its own sentimental propaganda about the coming of a new postracial America. As journalistic commentators have been pointing out ever since, no such color-blind animal in fact exists, yet the President and all his men have continued to act as if the species had already been verified, awarded a taxonomic name, and set down in the pertinent scientific literature.

Obama, feigning humility or coyness or both, has always been quick to dismiss the election of a half-black man to the presidency as no big thing, yet it is, indeed, a very big thing. Certainly, it is too large to have been succeeded, in the space of a few short weeks and months, by a $787 billion stimulus, the bailout of several huge financial institutions, the federal acquisition of a major automobile manufacturer, and, later, the passage of a federal healthcare bill whose unintelligibility is equaled only by its obvious unaffordability. The result of such unabashedly socialist policies is Obama's plummeting popularity (33 percent), the galvanizing of a Republican Party thought to have been as dead as William Jennings Bryan's Chautauqua, and the Tea Party.

LIBERALISM as a political movement (it never was a political philosophy, for the very good reason that it fails to approach the level of philosophy at all) never made sense in spite of the fact that the majority of Americans since the War Between the States have been liberals, whether they knew it or not. It took what James Kalb calls advanced liberalism, coming in the last quarter of the 20th century, to bring the American public to a sort of political Great Awakening, in which they find themselves, somewhat groggily, shaking themselves and rubbing their eyes. Or rather, one half of the American public, the other having converted—as it seems, irredeemably—to the advanced-liberal ideology, which is really the old liberalism stretched and distorted and pummeled from its youthful naive falsity into senile surrealism. The arrival of advanced liberalism has divided the United States between the New and the Old America, a division that is unlikely to be resolved in the foreseeable future but is becoming, rather, more fixed and rigid. Liberalism in the era of Obama represents for the Old American culture what Islam does for the culture of Old Europe. "[B]etween us and you there is a great gulf fixed . . ." Liberals blame an unenlightened reactionary mass for the divide, but in truth the fault is theirs, and all theirs. Advanced liberalism demands that people think, believe, and act in ways that it is simply unnatural for human beings to think, believe, and act, and it is unlikely that it will win over a greater proportion of Americans to those ways than it has managed thus far to do. The battle lines have been drawn. America is fated to remain a house divided against herself for many generations, and afterward to share the inevitable fate of all divided houses, which are by nature ungovernable, and hence unlivable.

A century and a half ago the United States wasted the greatest opportunity in American history to divide peacefully into two geographic sections, each left to go its own way. Our ancestors had their chance, and they threw it aside. (Had they not, the fastidious Yankees of our own time would enjoy the inestimable satisfaction of requiring the Neanderthal Confederates to obtain visas before traveling north.) For four terrible years, the United States suffered

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the War Between the States. That was terrible enough, but that was all it was—a conflict between two discrete opposing unions. Today, she faces the prospect of real civil war, a war among citizens that cannot be settled by the physical separation of the adherents of the two sides, who, to a greater or a lesser degree, are integrated one with the other across an entire continent. The day may yet come when America will rue the chance she long ago refused, to separate what Orestes Brownson called the personal or barbaric democracy of the South from the humanitarian democracy of the North. (He preferred the first kind.) The problem then was a simple one, and so was the solution. Today, it has become an impossible problem, for which there is no imaginable solution. Modern Americans do indeed exhibit a tendency to settle in communities according to their own kind—not just racially and ethnically compatible communities but politically agreeable ones as well. (One thinks of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Salt Lake City.) But these demographic self-rearrangements are insufficient to the scope of the difficulty, save on a statewide basis, in which case the resulting blocs of states would be unlikely to enjoy a convenient geographic contiguity. Whatever the solution—if there is a solution—turns out to be, it is clearly impossible that the United States should continue as she is going, trapped in a state of radical instability and wracked by the most profound public dissensions and animosities that inevitably acquire a personal dimension.

The Tea Party, as I have said, is not an agent of political change. It is an expression of a widespread popular demand for a kind of political and social reformation that has yet even to begin to be formulated in a conscious and deliberate way and coupled to a political vehicle devised more or less expressly for itself: a collection of loosely affiliated raiding parties, not an organized army fighting for a determined collective goal. Thus, the need seems to be for the eventual identification of some such goal, and the creation of a political movement capable of achieving it. Unfortunately, the times are probably not ripe for these developments. John Lukacs's maxim that change within democratic polities always comes slowly may be soon tested. The United States, indeed, has changed radically, and with radical speed, in the past 60 years, and no one can say where she is going (except to likely disaster) and how fast she is going there. For this reason, the Tea Party's essentially reactive, *ad hoc*, short-term strategy may be just what is wanted, for now. Perhaps, following this strategy that is in fact no strategy at all, it may help to create a political climate in this country from which some big political thing may arise. The Tea Party, and whatever friends and allies it may succeed in scrounging up for itself, are unlikely to create a true political party and less likely still ever to control the government, while the prospect of their establishing a ruling elite, as Sam Francis hoped his Middle American Radicals might do someday, is a near social and political impossibility. The New Class rules because it is necessary to the New America it has created, and, so long as the New America survives, the New Class has nothing finally to fear from the Tea Party and its sympathizers. This raises the great question whether the New America is actually sustainable, socially, economically, and politically speaking; or whether, as Edward Abbey put it 30 years ago, our only hope might not be catastrophe.

It is certainly conceivable that a new spirit of resistance could rise in America, spread itself around the country, and achieve in time a more populist, or popular, alternative to the increasingly despised and despaired of system with which Americans are saddled and bridled today. But while it may be possible to recover, or recreate, something of the Old American political system, the Old American civilization is gone for good. We cannot look for a restoration of that, and to look, or hope, for such a thing is to court unreality, cynicism, and despair, as the Tea Party so often does by its demand that Old Americans should be given their country back. No political movement, not even the resurrection of the Founding Fathers, could possibly accomplish such a miracle. Christ raised Lazarus and Himself from the dead. He never raised ancient Israel, the Israel of judges and kings, or the Israel of His own time, Israel under the Roman Empire, and He never will—at least not before the end of time itself.

Even so, the past couple of years are beginning to loom as significant ones in recent American history. Something, I cannot help feeling (feeling, not thinking), has happened, and is happening, in America. In these two years, America's rulers have learned, for the first time since Alexander Hamilton expressed his theoretical fear of the Great Beast, the People, to fear the mob—the New American Mob. That is a healthy thing for all Americans, the ruled and their rulers alike: the first in their freedoms and possessions; the second in their souls.

Chilton Williamson, Jr., is Chronicles' *senior editor for books.*

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L'Oiseau bleu

by Eric Sellin

In Paris, when I was young,
I met a man who claimed to be
the French flying ace of World War I
known as *L'Oiseau bleu*. He showed
me a tattered clipping with a photo
of someone in flying togs
standing by an airplane—
the face too small and blurred
to really tell—and claimed it was,
indeed, he.
I had my doubts,
but when I later overheard
him going also by the names
of Marco Polo and Sindbad,
I knew, for sure, that,
whatever other delusions
he might have had,
he had at some time
laid eyes for an instant
upon a holy light
reflected by the surface
at the distant confines
of a golden sea.

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Democrats and Jihadists: A Love Affair

by R. Cort Kirkwood

THE BELTWAY RIGHT is a comical farce. But like the blind squirrel that occasionally finds an acorn, it is right about one thing: Liberal Democrats simply cannot be trusted on national security. That truth was no more apparent than in early April, when an A-list of Virginia Democrats were named "invited guests" on a flyer advertising the annual fundraising banquet of the Dar Al-Hijrah mosque in Falls Church. Perhaps you have heard of the place, which is also called the September 11 mosque because two of the hijackers who attacked America that fateful day nine years ago sought spiritual guidance within its walls. It also ministered to Army Maj. Nidal Hasan before he killed 13 Americans at Fort Hood in November.

As neoconservative national-security guru Frank Gaffney reported on March 30 at *BigGovernment.com*, the nawabs expected to appear at the dinner included former Gov. Tim Kaine, chairman of the Democratic National Committee; Reps. Jim Moran and Gerry Connolly; Sen. James Webb; Del. Kaye Kory; and Fairfax County supervisors Sharon Bulova and Penny Gross. You might remember Kory. As I reported in these pages in May ("Dominion Mosque," *Cultural Revolutions*), Kory was one of two delegates who invited an imam from this very mosque to offer the opening prayer at Virginia's General Assembly.

Following pressure from Gaffney and the Virginia Anti-Shariah Task Force, Webb and Kory elected not to participate in the event. Moran and Kaine did not attend; the other three would not comment when task-force activists asked their offices whether they broke bread at the September 11 mosque. Why Gaffney & Co. pushed these left-wing politicians to drop their support is obvious: The Democrats' participation conveys legitimacy on a terror-connected mosque that ought to be shut down.

Muslim money flows into Democratic coffers like a Saudi gusher. Space does not permit a detailed accounting of Islam's network in Virginia and what its members have accomplished, largely with the help of Democratic Party diversicrats such as Kaine. A few short examples, involving one politician and a few jihadists, must suffice.

The politician is Rep. Gerry Connolly. As reported in these pages last year ("Fairabia," *Vital Signs*, December 2009), Connolly was the Fairfax County supervisor who became nothing less than an agent for the Saudi government. Connolly pushed through the renewal of the Saudi embassy's lease of county property in Alexandria for the campus of the Saudi Islamic Academy. In addition, he rammed through the county's approval of the academy's 100,000-square-foot expansion at its second campus. Despite the academy's use of virulently antisemitic and jihadist textbooks, and despite heavy opposition from county residents worried not only about the school's ideology but about its effect on traffic, Connolly prevailed. Anyone who stood in his way was a "bigot." That's standard Democratic fare. But Connolly's gung-ho fight for the academy, whose most illustrious graduate was convicted of trying to assassinate President George W. Bush, smelled more than a little funny.

According to *Muslim Mafia*, written by Paul Sperry and mosque infiltrator P. David Gaubatz, Saudi Arabia's top p.r. firm "pumped at least $10,000 into Connolly's local campaign." The money "started appearing when the Saudi *madrassa* started attracting national headlines and continued to flow through the end of Connolly's run for Congress" in 2008. Connolly bagged $18,758 from the Saudis. "Thanks to Connolly," the authors conclude, "the Saudis have been allowed to maintain an incubator for jihadists in the shadow of the nation's capital."

That would be bad enough. But some of the contributors to the campaigns of Connolly and other Democrats have not only attracted the interest of the FBI but landed in federal prison for terrorist connections. Among them are Yaqub Mirza, Esam Omeish, Nihad Awad, Abdelhaleem Ashqar, and Abdurahman Alamoudi.

As Sperry wrote at *WorldNetDaily.com*, Yaqub Mirza worked, and may still work, at the SAFA Group, which the federal government has investigated for terrorist financing. *DiscoverTheNetworks.org* reports that the SAFA Group was connected to a Saudi sheikh's foundation known as SAAR. In 2002, the FBI raided SAAR's offices and found that $26 million of $54 million raised for "charity" went to the Isle of Man, a notorious tax haven and money-laundering center. Just $20 million wound up in charitable hands. The agent who led the raid said SAFA's and SAAR's purpose was "to route money through hidden paths to terrorists, and to defraud the United States by impeding, importing, obstructing, and defeating the lawful functions of the IRS."

As I reported here, Esam Omeish is the physician whom Kaine kicked off a state immigration panel after videos

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of the doctor's jihadist, antisemitic rants surfaced on YouTube. Omeish also put his home up to post bond for Ismail Elbarasse, the former comptroller of the Saudi Academy nabbed for taking surveillance photos of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Elbarasse was never convicted in that case, but in 1998 he spent some time in prison for refusing to testify in a terror-financing case. Yet the Democrats are so taken with Omeish that they permitted him to run in their 2008 primary for delegate from Virginia's 35th district in the General Assembly. (He lost.)

Nihad Awad is executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, an unindicted coconspirator in the Holy Land Foundation case. The foundation was pumping money into Hamas. "Before helping launch CAIR," the Investigative Project on Terrorism reports, Awad

> worked as public relations director for the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) in 1993 and 1994. A 2001 Immigration and Naturalization Service memo documented IAP's support for Hamas and found that the "facts strongly suggest" that IAP was "part of Hamas' propaganda apparatus."

Awad can be seen in a photo with then-Texas Gov. George W. Bush, and in another standing next to Bush at the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C., a few days after the September 11 attacks.

Abdelhaleem Ashqar is a suspected Hamas leader who is serving 11 years for obstruction of justice in a case involving Hamas. Again, the case was about financial aid originating in the United States. Ashqar refused to testify before a grand jury. The Associated Press recorded his comments to the sentencing court: "The only option was to become a traitor or collaborator and that is something that I can't do and will never do as long as I live."

Then there's Abdurahman Alamoudi. He was the founder of the American Muslim Council and the American Muslim Foundation. Part of a plot to kill a Saudi prince, Alamoudi pleaded guilty to three federal crimes involving terror financing *via* Libya, tax fraud, and lying on his citizenship application. A federal prosecutor said Alamoudi's conviction was "a milestone in the war on terrorism." Alamoudi had worked his way right up to the Clinton White House. According to *DiscoverTheNetworks.org*, "in 1995 Alamoudi helped President Clinton and the ACLU develop a presidential guideline entitled 'Religious Expression in Public School,' which paved the way for the abolition of Christian symbols, such as the Nativity scene, from public school grounds." Yet he was a major backer of Hamas and Hezbollah and a million-dollar fundraiser for Al Qaeda who claimed that Muslims would one day rule America. This naturalized American must have forgotten to assimilate.

All these men appear in the Federal Election Commission's online database as contributors not only to Moran or Connolly or both but to others obviously sympathetic to their cause, such as Rep. Cynthia McKinney. Regardless of a candidate's sympathies, these Muslims tossed around the moolah. In 2000, Alamoudi gave $1,000 to Hillary Clinton's Senate campaign and George W. Bush's presidential effort. In 2002, he gave $2,000 to Moran. (Bush and Moran returned the money.) Mirza gave Virginia gubernatorial candidate James Gilmore $2,300 in 2007. Mirza even hit Libertarian presidential candidate Bob Barr with $500. Although Republicans have received some Muslim money and are to some extent compromised, Muslims clearly favor Democrats.

Islam hangs like Muhammad's scimitar over a neck of Virginia that includes Robert E. Lee's Arlington and George Washington's Mount Vernon.

Indeed, the FEC records show that Muslim fanatics have thoroughly penetrated Virginia's Democratic Party. Such was their monetary influence that real Virginians could not stop the expansion of a school that preaches hatred of Jews and employs and graduates terrorists. The party permitted a fanatical jihadist to run for the General Assembly. This penetration is eerily reminiscent of what the communists accomplished in the 1950's, when Democrats called anyone concerned about spies a McCarthyite or witch hunter. Today, Democrats call those concerned about Islamic terrorism racists and Islamophobes.

Islam hangs like Muhammad's scimitar over a neck of Virginia that includes Robert E. Lee's Arlington and George Washington's Mount Vernon. Falls Church is the "Wahhabi Corridor." The Old Dominion's suburbs outside Washington, D.C., are "Northern Virginiastan."

When the scimitar falls, Virginians will know whom to blame.

R. Cort Kirkwood is the author of Real Men: Ten Courageous Americans To Know and Admire.

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Independence Day

by Eric Sellin

Freedom is a light for which
many men have died in darkness.
—Lines engraved on a monument
in Washington Square, Philadelphia

Seated on a bench in the square, feeding crumbs to the birds,
The poet looks up at the green canopy of leaves
With its random patches of sky and searches for words
With which to forge lines in which one might believe.

But he senses, around him, too many distractions;
The tweeting of the birds and cries of children at play,
And—on another plane—death's persistent abstraction
That haunts this city square, by night and by day:

The muffled moans of witnesses of olden days
Who lie in their unmarked graves, here in this square,
Where a monument and its graceful flame aver
Something vaster than a poet's hollow praise

For those who died in darkness that we might know
Freedom's light . . . or at least its afterglow.

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To Teach or To Sneer

AUTHENTIC CONSERVATIVES and their libertarian allies have long been a small minority in a larger movement that, for the most part, rejected their radical critique of the managerial state. The "paleos" were singled out for attack by the neoconservatives, that exotic sect of ex-leftists prophetically described by Russell Kirk as "this little Sacred Band—which had made itself exclusive, and now finds itself excluded."

Today, the neoconservative stranglehold on the American right has been broken. As the role of George W. Bush, their dauphin and dupe, in bringing us to our present predicament has been revealed, right-wing activists involved in the grassroots Tea Party movement have learned their lesson from those years of betrayal and "big-government conservatism." Speaking to CNN at the Utah GOP convention, where incumbent four-term Republican senator Bob Bennett was rejected as the party nominee, Tea Party leader David Kirkham averred,

> I don't think it's a matter of "conservative." I think it's a matter of fiscal or financial responsibility, what the Tea Party people are about and the vote for TARP and the vote for the bailout was, in our opinion, pretty fiscally irresponsible and that's what's raised the ire of most people. . . . That one vote affected a lot of things, changed the rules of the game. President Bush said that where we have to abandon free market principles to save the free market and fundamentally, we just don't agree. There's just no way.

The hysterical fear and genuine hatred in the eyes of the "mainstream" media as they cover the rise of the Tea Party phenomenon is hard to miss, and that alone is a good clue as to what they're about. That's why I was baffled by a recent article penned for the *Christian Science Monitor* by Jim Bovard, a libertarian whose work has appeared on *Antiwar.com*, attacking the Tea Partiers as hypocrites who

> oppose big government, except when it is warring, wiretapping, or waterboarding. A movement that started out denouncing government power apparently has no beef with some of the worst abuses of modern times.

It seems Bovard attended a Tea Party in Rockville, Maryland, in the course of which a speaker called for war with Iran, and the sentiments expressed were anything but libertarian or authentically conservative. He proffers poll numbers showing that 57 percent of the Tea Partiers recall Bush with fondness, and that some have the bad taste to admit openly that they like Sarah Palin. And nothing was said about the wiretapping begun by the Bush administration and continued by Obama. Horrible! Terrible! Unbearable! And proof that the Tea Partiers "hate liberals more than they love liberty."

Bovard's view of the Tea Party phenomenon is oddly myopic. Maryland, thick with government employees, is hardly a Tea Party stronghold. The insurgent right-wing populism that is now taking the GOP by storm came out of the West, where the first Tea Party demonstrations took place. It was the Ron Paul brigades, and before them Libertarian Party activists, who started the tradition of protests in front of post offices every Tax Day.

The Tea Partiers are not a monolithic organization but a diffuse antigovernment populist movement, sparked by the bank bailouts. Here is a perfect opportunity for libertarians to educate the inchoate right-wing populist masses. And Ron Paul's Campaign for Liberty and Young Americans for Liberty are certainly driving the lesson home: The Republican Party of Maine has recently adopted a platform that stipulates the party's adherence to Austrian economics! Can a movement like that be all that bad, even by Bovard's exacting libertarian standards?

Libertarian economic theory, particularly the variant of it promulgated by Ludwig von Mises and his American followers, frames the current crisis in terms ordinary Americans can understand. By making the Federal Reserve a hot political issue, Representative Paul has shown the way forward for libertarians.

We are going into debt and destroying our own economy in order to prop up the government of Afghan "president" Hamid Karzai, a hash-smoking fashion plate whose authority barely extends beyond Kabul. If the Republican Party of Maine is now adhering to Austrian economics, it won't be long before they realize that you can't have an empire and a free market. But of course they won't learn anything if, instead of teaching, we sneer at them from the august pages of the *Christian Science Monitor*. ◆

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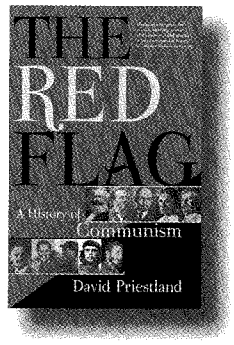

Who Won the Cold War?

by Wayne Allensworth

The Red Flag: A History of Communism
by David Priestland
New York: Grove Press
688 pp., $30.00

IN HIS FOREWORD TO *WITNESS*, Whittaker Chambers, writing in the "form of a letter to my children," tries to explain the appeal of communism:

> I see in Communism the focus of the concentrated evil of our time. You will ask: Why, then, do men become Communists? How did it happen that you, our gentle and loved father, was once a Communist? Were you simply stupid? No, I was not stupid. Were you morally depraved? No, I was not morally depraved. Indeed, educated men become Communists chiefly for moral reasons. Did you not know that the crimes and horrors of Communism are inherent in Communism? Yes, I knew that fact. Then why did you become a Communist? It would help more to ask: How did it happen that this movement, once a mere muttering of political outcasts, became the immense force that now contests the mastery of mankind? Even when all the chances and mistakes of history are allowed for, the answer must be: Communism makes some profound appeal to the human mind.

Chambers went on to describe the ancient origins of what he called man's "second oldest faith." "Its promise," he wrote,

> was whispered in the first days of the Creation under the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil: "Ye shall be as gods." It is the great alternative faith of mankind. Like all great faiths, its force derives from a simple vision. Other ages have had great visions. They have always been different versions of the same vision: the vision of God and man's relationship to God. The Communist vision is the vision of Man without God.

Chambers uncovered the spiritual roots of what was made manifest in one form as communism, in others as the hydra of radicalism that has haunted mankind since the expulsion from Eden, whether as the sexual obsessions of the libertines, feminists, and militant homosexuals; the growing power of Leviathan and bureaucracy; or the ruthlessness of globalist capitalism and self-absorbed consumerism. The rebellion is older than what we call modernity, or postmodern formlessness, but, in Chambers' time as in our own, the rebellion against authority and the restrictions of traditional morality have been closely linked to modernization, the latest version of which goes by the name globalization.

David Priestland reviews the history of what he calls the "Promethean" and "utopian" communist movement in *The Red Flag*. The book is engaging, but frustrating in its failure to elaborate a theme that remains an undercurrent: man's desire to overturn the natural order, to steal the fire from Zeus. True, the author did not set out to write a testament like Chambers'. His is a political history of the communist movement as it attracts a following, becomes an apparently overwhelming force, and ultimately fails to deliver the utopia it promised. *The Red Flag* succeeds at this level, but the limits of Priestland's treatment of the subject are related to his implied acceptance of most of the assumed values that Chambers and Solzhenitsyn rejected: egalitarianism, secularism, materialism, and what is best described as rebellion—a rejection of limits and of authority. While Priestland recoils from "utopian" and "dogmatic" ideologies, he, like both "liberals" and most "conservatives" in our time, accepts the rest.

Much of the book is devoted to struggles within the communist movement between what Priestland calls "modernist" or "technocratic" Marxism and a "romantic" current. It is a tension between the desire for material abundance (viewed by the modernist school as achievable only by industrialization, centralization, and bureaucratization) and utopian visions of a society unencumbered by hierarchy and distinctions between individuals and led by

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the "vanguard party" on the way to perfect equality and self-realization. Thus, the conflict between the Stalinists and Maoists, between the cult of the Leader and the T-shirted, would-be Che Guevaras of 1968. Yet the two strains coexisted to one degree or another, even in Stalin's Soviet Union, where the "Man of Steel" portrayed the transformation of society and Soviet modernization as an act of will. That romantic view, together with the conspiratorial origins of the party in Russia (a model followed across the globe), fueled the hunt for "enemies of the people," "self criticism," and re-education efforts under Mao's "Great Leap Forward" and "Cultural Revolution" programs, as well as Pol Pot's anti-industrialization onslaught in the killing fields of Cambodia. Transforming society and human nature required mass terror and social upheaval, whether the goal was modernization or communist anarchy.

ONE OF THE UNSETTLING elements of Priestland's treatment of communist history is his reportorial style in dealing with mass terror. The reader gets some numbers (estimates of those who perished or were prisoners in communist gulags), but no sense of what the bizarre, hall-of-mirrors atmosphere was like in societies dominated by fanatical ideologues and murderous opportunists. For that, one must read Robert Conquest, or Solzhenitsyn, or Simon Sebag Montefiore's *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*. Again, the book's aim is to present a political history of a movement, not a catalogue of horrors, but if those horrors are, as Chambers wrote, inherent in the movement, then Priestland's treatment misses the elephant in the room.

Space limitations make it necessary to leave many of Priestland's thought-provoking episodes and themes unmentioned, but there are two that cannot go without remark. First, Chambers' comments on the appeal of communism were a reference to man's fallen nature and the recurring human desire to remake reality. On that level, the movement attracted intellectuals, but Priestland's book emphasizes the desire for modernization, nationalism, the heavy-handed rule of oligarchs, and the tensions in societies marked by wide gaps between races and ethnic groups and social and economic classes as factors that contributed a base of support for communist movements around the world. Priestland suggests that the encounter with modernity and its organizational, mobilizing, and technological superiority spurred many nationalists in developing countries to adopt Marxism as a vehicle for both bashing the technologically and materially superior Other (the West) and providing a communist blueprint for modernization. In this way, the "romantic" and internationalist Marxists could fly under the false flag of nationalism, rallying populations chafed by foreign domination and peasants who wanted their own land to the red banner. Most readers will be familiar with how communist regimes have used nationalism in times of crisis. The myth of the "Great Patriotic War" served to prop up a moribund Soviet regime for decades, as Priestland notes. So we have another answer to Chambers' question, "Why did you become a Communist?" That the global East and South have in most cases not coped very well with the results of modernization gives those of us in the West and North something to consider; the collapse we see in many developing countries should prompt us to reflect on the social anomie that the same processes have unleashed upon us. In other words, *we* are not dealing all that successfully with modernity, even though we invented it. Perhaps there is something wrong with our assumptions.

Priestland also offers an interesting view of the rise of the neoconservatives, accompanied by a warning that the neoconservative-neoliberal messianic impulse is as utopian as communism. He connects the dots, ascribing the origins of what became known as neoconservatism to the left. Priestland backs up to the 1940's, the Trotskyite clash with the Stalinists, and Irving Kristol's reading at Alcove No. 1 of New York City College to make this observation:

> It may seem far-fetched to seek Marxist roots in neo-conservatism . . . but [neoconservatives] shared a number of Trotskyist attitudes: internationalism, a belief in struggle, the utopian notion of a moral society at the "end of history," a hatred of Stalinist realpolitik, and most importantly, a Romantic belief in the power of ideas and morality to change the world.

As Priestland asserts, the neoconservatives are the equivalent of the Romantic Marxists, while their counterparts, the technocratic-modernists of the political equation, are the neoliberal proponents of the market gospel. One side favors military mobilization to spread the gospel, the other what would be called "soft power"—promoting "human rights" and cultural penetration. The avatar of the new synthesis was Ronald Reagan, who, as Priestland says, adopted the "Marxist-inflected language" of the neoliberal-neoconservative synthesis and reflected its "revolutionary idealism." It was Reagan who packaged his conservatism as a "revolution" that would "bring democracy to the world."

Priestland warns that, if this new force learns nothing from the latest economic crisis, we may be faced with "another bloody act in the tragedy of Prometheus." But many people on the right, having read this book, may ask themselves, "Did we really win the Cold War?"

Wayne Allensworth is the author of The Russian Question: Nationalism, Modernization, and Post-Communist Russia.

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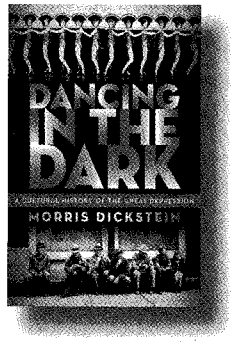

Chorus Lines

by Clark Stooksbury

Dancing in the Dark: A Cultural History of the Great Depression
by Morris Dickstein
New York: W.W. Norton
598 pp., $29.95

THE CATASTROPHIC BURST of the housing bubble in the fall of 2008 shook the foundations of the world economy and instilled a fear of a new depression. Morris Dickstein notes with irony that he completed his cultural history of the Great Depression just as the country was entering a steep recession with parallels to the 1930's. In his hefty *Dancing in the Dark*, Dickstein probes the cultural landscape of the Depression era. He places heavy emphasis on fiction and film, but also devotes attention to photography, music, design, and architecture. The Great Depression "kindled America's social imagination, firing enormous interest in how ordinary people lived."

At a time of steep economic downturn, it is no surprise that poverty should be a topic covered in a variety of media, and *Dancing in the Dark* notes the importance of photographers in documenting it. Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, and Margaret Bourke-White created iconic images that have helped to illustrate the Depression for later generations, and Dickstein has reproduced many well-known photographs throughout his text. Some of this work was done at the behest of the federal government; as Dickstein notes, because

> government interventions in the nation's economic life were controversial, the [Farm Security Administration] created the Photography Unit under Roy Stryker to build support for the New Deal policies by documenting the grim realities of the rural Depression.

Dickstein considers several novels of the era, giving special emphasis to Michael Gold's *Jews Without Money*. Gold was a communist and an editor at *New Masses*; later, he worked as a columnist at the *Daily Worker*, where Dickstein describes him as having been "one of the most reliable and vituperative of Stalinist hatchet men." The novel, published in 1930, is set in the Jewish ghetto of turn-of-the-century New York and implies the author's conviction that "the whole rotten [social] structure needed to be torn down." Dickstein considers also John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, which he characterizes as a road tale with didactic Popular Front elements. "When Tom figures out that if the pickers refuse to pick peaches, they will rot, Steinbeck is crafting a simple lesson in collective action and the power of the people." For this, Steinbeck was attacked by "politicians, newspapers, and business interests."

The Grapes of Wrath was brought to the big screen in a landmark 1940 film directed by John Ford that Dickstein credits with giving a "physical actuality and immediacy to the characters that Steinbeck himself could not fully provide." That criticism attests to the power of movies, especially after the rise of talking pictures, which coincided roughly with the collapse of 1920's prosperity: Warner Brothers released *The Jazz Singer*, which pioneered sound, in 1927. In October 1930, *Film Daily* noted that "silents have reached the antique stage and are now approaching the curio era." That same year was a high point for film attendance: 80 million Americans went to the movies every week. Those numbers declined for a few years, but, at the low point of the Depression, tens of millions of Americans regularly dropped their nickels at the box office. Dickstein claims that, although the movie studios "were under tremendous economic pressure, with some teetering on the verge of bankruptcy, . . . somehow movies became a significant part of how the American people adapted to the Depression." It is natural, therefore, that *Dancing in the Dark* should devote substantial attention to the films of the Depression era.

Ignoring Shirley Temple's movies and Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone With the Wind*, which sold millions of copies and inspired an epic film, Dickstein demonstrates a preference for the gangster films and backstage musicals of Warner Brothers, as well as the films of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers that were released by RKO. He seems especially enamored of the on-screen choreography of Busby Berkeley in four backstage musicals from the Warner studio released in 1933 and 1934, as the country was in transition from the Hoover

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to the Roosevelt administrations: *42nd Street*, *Gold Diggers of 1933*, *Footlight Parade*, and *Dames* all feature the singing and footwork of Ruby Keeler and Dick Powell in thinly plotted stories that culminate in the "outrageous surrealism" of Berkeley's choreography. Dickstein rejects the notion that such movies were no more than escapist fare. While they contain comedy along with singing and dancing, they also feature stories of economic desperation: Unemployed showgirls dodge landlords, while desperate directors seek funding for their productions. One especially poignant number from *Gold Diggers*, "Remember My Forgotten Man," compares the army of the unemployed to the expeditionary force that went "over there," to France in 1918. The accompanying stage production features dozens of men (a departure from Berkeley's more frequent use of scantily clad females) shown marching in uniform as doughboys, then returning in the other direction, bloodied and battered as if from combat; lastly, they are shown standing on a bread line. Dickstein describes this scene as Berkeley's "astounding attempt to choreograph the entire look and significance of the Depression." He further ties the scene to an event that would have been fresh in film viewers' memories—the Bonus Expeditionary Force of former doughboys that had marched on Washington requesting an early release of a bonus scheduled to be paid out in 1945 to veterans of the Great War, and who had been violently dispersed by the military, less than a year before *Gold Diggers of 1933* was released.

The United States is now supposed to be in a Great Recession that may yet prove as deep and long as the Great Depression, but the country doesn't have the sort of common culture that it had in the 30's, when movies were far more central to American popular culture than they are today. Instead of scraping together your pennies to see *Footlight Parade*, today you might download an episode of *Lost* to your iPhone, watch a YouTube video mixing the gangsta rap of the late Notorious B.I.G. and the bubblegum pop of Miley Cyrus, or play Farmville on Facebook. A future scholar studying the culture of the Great Recession, hampered by an inexhaustible mass of material to work with, is certain to find the task an unenviable one.

Clark Stooksbury writes from Knoxville, Tennessee.

The Long View

The editors of *Chronicles* know that the battle for the soul of our civilization will rage until the end of time. You can help *Chronicles* stay in the fight for generations to come by making a gift to the endowment of The Rockford Institute, publisher of *Chronicles*. The Institute is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, and gifts to the Institute are tax-deductible to the limit of the law. Your gift can take the form of:

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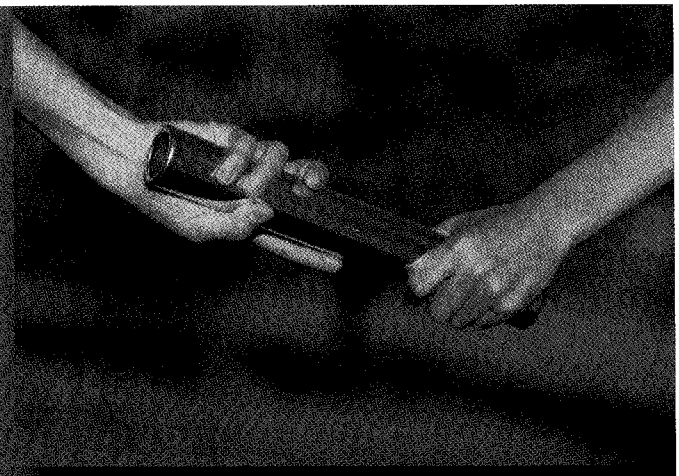

For more information, please write or call

Christopher Check
Executive Vice President
The Rockford Institute
928 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103

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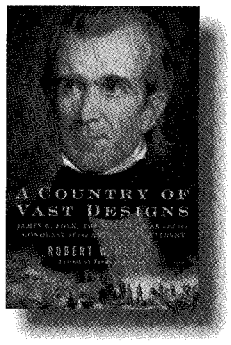

The Logic of the Map

by H.A. Scott Trask

A Country of Vast Designs: James K. Polk, The Mexican War and the Conquest of the American Continent
by Robert W. Merry
New York: Simon & Schuster
592 pp., $30.00

SOON AFTER his election in 1844, James K. Polk sat down with the historian George Bancroft and, before offering him the Cabinet post of secretary of the Navy, sketched the four objectives of his presidency. They were to lower the tariff, restore the independent treasury system, extend American sovereignty over the vast Oregon Country (claimed also by the British), and acquire the Mexican province of California. He achieved all four. He also got New Mexico. By his Oregon Treaty and Mexican Cession, Polk added 943,097 square miles to the national domain (the Louisiana Purchase had added 827,987), extended American rule from the crest of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific shore, and made the United States a continental confederation. No president has ever done more of lasting benefit for his country.

It is worth recalling all that was gained. The new territory on the western ocean extended from the Strait of Juan de Fuca in the north to San Diego in the south, boasted three magnificent natural harbors, featured the lush and temperate valley of the Willamette (at the terminus of the Oregon Trail), and was blessed with a paradisiacal climate and spectacular natural beauty. This much was known. What was not known (but soon would be) were the rich gold fields along the rivers flowing out of the High Sierras, as well as the abundant silver veins on the eastern side of the range. Nor was it known, or even suspected, that the Central Valley of California would become, once irrigated, one of the most productive vegetable- and fruit-growing regions in the world. Americans then thought of California only as ranch country.

So how has Polk fared in the 21st century? Most Americans have never heard of him. Presidential historians rank him among the "near great" of our chief executives, but pundits and politicos accuse him of military aggression against unoffending Mexico and blame him in part for the Civil War. Such opinions are not really new. The Whig-controlled Massachusetts legislature alleged, during the conflict, that the Mexican War was a conspiracy to extend slavery. Ulysses Grant, who fought in it, called it "the most unjust war ever waged." But what were then minority opinions (the war was popular in every region of the country except parts of New England) are now all the fashion. The Mexican War is condemned as if it were the German invasion of Poland or the Roman conquest of Gaul. Ron Tyler, former director of the Texas State Historical Association, calls it "the War of Yankee aggression, and to call it anything else is wrong." Former Vice President Al Gore has said that it is "condemned by history." (Mr. Gore evidently does not know that history has no agency and renders no judgments.) Meanwhile, the Mexicans cite the war as justification for their own *reconquista* of the American Southwest.

All that is why Robert Merry's study of Polk's expansionism is so surprising. He dismisses the slaveholder-conspiracy allegation as "without foundation" and defends the policy and justice of the war. His prose is free of the strident moralism and p.c. devil-terms (*e.g., racism, white supremacy, slave power*) that poison the textbooks and monographs issued by our institutes of higher indoctrination. Merry is not an academic but a journalist, and his book is meant for the general reader.

Several factors account for Polk's forgotten-man status, according to Merry. Unlike his mentor and fellow Tennessean Andrew Jackson, Polk was never a popular icon or symbol, and his presidency has been overshadowed by the wrenching civil conflict that followed just 12 years later. But the biggest reason is that he offends a "foreign policy liberalism . . . that deprecates wars fought for national interest and glorifies those fought for humanitarian ideals." In other words, he does not reflect the flattering image of ourselves as sacrificial do-gooders progressively ridding the world of evil. International politics, Merry observes, "doesn't turn on moral pivots but on differentials of power, will, organization, and population." He is right, but the statement suggests a question: In whose interest, then, are American wars being fought? They are certainly intend-

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ed to be in *someone's* interest. Alas, that is a subject for another book. Nevertheless, I cannot help observing that, beginning with the Spanish-American War (1898-99), few of our wars have been in the nation's interest.

Here is the geopolitical reality that Polk grasped. In the 1840's, the western third of the North American continent was in play. The players were the United States, Great Britain, Russia, and Mexico. Each claimed some portion of that vast territory. Polk understood that the question was not which of those claims was most legitimate (who, after all, would decide that?), but which of the four powers had the means and will to enforce their own. Mexico did not. She "was a dysfunctional, unstable, weak nation whose population wasn't sufficient to control all the lands within its domain." Bernard DeVoto made the same point two generations ago:

> [I]t is a fundamental mistake to think of Mexico, in this period, or for many years before, as a republic, or even as a government. It must be understood as a late stage in the breakdown of the Spanish Empire.

There was no stability or institutional legitimacy in Mexico. Revolution followed revolution, coup succeeded coup. Mexican governments could neither govern, protect, nor populate the country's far northern provinces. That incapacity was most obvious in New Mexico, where the people were oppressed by taxes and terrorized by Indian raids, and consequently not inclined to fight in its defense. Thus did Gen. Manuel Armijo's army of conscripts flee at the approach of the Americans. Col. Stephen Watts Kearny's army of frontier dragoons and Missouri volunteer cavalry took Sante Fe without a fight.

Even in California, where conditions were better, there was little popular will to resist an American invasion. In the South, the sons of privilege with their fine horses and sharp lances put up a spirited fight, but they were too few. Even without a war, three or four more years of transcontinental migration would have put Americans in control of the province. (In 1842, there were a mere 4,000 *Californios*—whites of Spanish descent—400 Americans, and a few hundred Europeans.) The Mexican government had tried to prevent the inevitable by ordering Americans out of California and forbidding any more from coming into the province. (Curiously, this example of Mexican nativism and xenophobia goes unremarked by our academic Pharisees.)

DeVoto believed that an American conquest had "the logic of the map behind it." Merry believes that the Americans had a *casus belli*, too. First, the Mexican government had stopped making payments owed in compensation for spoliations of American property since the Mexican Revolution. (An independent arbitrator had certified two million dollars in claims. The Mexicans had paid only $300,000.) Second, the Mexican government refused to recognize the independence and sovereignty of the Texas Republic and declared American annexation of it (in 1845) to be an act of war. Third, Mexico broke off diplomatic relations with the United States and refused to receive the American envoy (John Slidell) sent to negotiate a diplomatic settlement of all outstanding issues. Fourth, the British government had designs on California, and there was a real possibility that a Mexican junta, needing funds to pay the troops, might sell the province to the British, in preference to the hated *Americanos*. If the British could also make good their claim to all the land north of the Columbia River (what is now Washington State), they could have shut out their American cousins from every natural harbor on the Pacific Coast and most of the coastline. Finally, it was the Mexicans who drew first blood by firing on and killing American cavalrymen in the disputed border region between the Rio del Norte and the Nueces. True enough, Polk had sent them there hoping to provoke an armed incident that would give him the wider war he needed. But the Mexicans would not negotiate and refused to sell land to satisfy the indemnity they owed the Americans. Had Polk sat back and twiddled his thumbs like a good Whig, scrupulous in his sensitivity to Mexican sensibilities and British hypocrisy, he could have lost it all, and today we would be building a wall along the southern border of Oregon, Idaho, and Wyoming, and the western line of Kansas.

It was Mr. Lincoln's war, after all, that shredded the Constitution and laid the foundations of the imperial state of the 20th century.

Do we really need to apologize for this war? Or make a hero of the president who, as an Illinois congressman, thought it wrong, only to inaugurate, 12 years later, a fratricidal bloodbath that took the lives of 618,000 Americans? (Only 12,876 soldiers died in the Mexican War.) It was Mr. Lincoln's war, after all, that shredded the Constitution and laid the foundations of the imperial state of the 20th century.

Herbert Arthur Scott Trask, an historian, lives and writes in the Missouri River hill country west of St. Louis.

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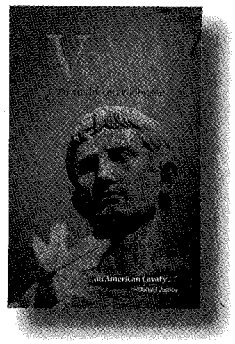

Mystery Tour

by Wilmer Mills

Veins: Poems by Larry Johnson
by Larry Johnson
Cincinnati, OH: David Robert Books
108 pp., $18.00

LARRY JOHNSON'S first book of poems, *Veins*, promises an engagement with history and tradition that is respectful, lively, and current. Open to any page at random, and you will find examples of real language handled by a poet who obviously knows what a poetic line is. (So many contemporary poets do not.) Consider these wonderful lines taken completely out of context: "Or hunger hauls them glossing from the sea"; "Grass billows backward from the cliff[.]"

Many of these good lines bring history to life in good poems. One of the best, "Red Skeletons at Herculaneum," is in the voice of a slave girl killed by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. The poem ends "and the boiling sludge enveloped us with the sound / of vast black mothwings beating on the sun." Such poems put one in mind of a well-made gumbo that combines layers of history, time-tested local ingredients, and attention to craft and process.

One can discover other such gems throughout, but, after reading the book cover to cover, I found that something about its overall structure strains the reader's initial optimism. The book's two sections are named *Adrenalin Night* and *Adrenalin Light*; the first section takes us on a journey from the present to 1821, thence from A.D. 406 to 966 B.C. This is done so programmatically that it obviously has some special meaning to the poet, but it serves no obvious function for the reader.

Almost every poem includes the name of a famous historical or literary figure in the title. We encounter Weldon Kees, James Wright, Ezra Pound, John Keats, Marcus Aurelius, Hadrian, Juvenal, *etc.* Unfortunately, this catalog of names and accompanying scenery, in descending order, starts to give the reader the sense of having stumbled into an apartment that is full of too many antiques, all of them arranged according to their time periods.

After 67 pages, we have a very clear sense of Johnson's knowledge of, and keen interest in, the classical world and the lives of poets he admires. But is he trying to claim some poetic kinship with such figures by posing with them? Is there some issue of time and memory he's playing with? Or do the 16 endnotes at the back of the book suggest something else? Erudition, maybe. The reader runs low on adrenalin, however, with 32 pages still to go in the second section.

Too often our tour guide engages in self-conscious jousting and posturing that become anachronistically ingratiating. The reader cringes when, in a poem called "Hangover in Memory of James Wright," the poet says, "Your life wasn't wasted. If anybody / reads and loves this poem / mine won't be either." This puts a huge burden on the poem—and the reader! On closer inspection, we begin to get the sense that when Johnson writes about a poet—say, Weldon Kees—he's also trying to write like Kees: "Movies, green wormwood of all pianos lost?"; like Pound: "I turned a corner—a plaza, a pulsing crowd!"; like Lorca: "What you were is the thirst of an orange tree"; like Cavafy: "my eyes are as green as that Cretan stone."

Such literary imitation takes real skill and can be a genuine tribute. But changing voices too often in series like this may also sound after a while like a fake British accent, giving a new spin to Yvor Winters' "Fallacy of Imitative Form." So, while the poems in which Johnson has done this are not uninteresting, and sometimes even very good, the problem here is that the reader can't figure out who this guy is. Either we have a poet with impressive range, gifted at impersonations in a selfless way, or his antiques-filled apartment begins to feel also like a name-dropper's wax museum.

Furthermore, what seemed pleasing at a glance about Johnson's lines at times becomes disappointing in context with the embedding poem. Larry Johnson does have a good ear for blank verse, but his metrical variations tend to come too quickly, too close together across multiple lines, so that the iambic norm is lost. It's as if he wants to work with a bouncy roiling rhythm where an occasional regular line provides relief. But just as the inner ear can't take that on a curvy road, neither can the poetic inner ear take too much variation without regular relief. With more pattern, the odd trochee or anapest would have a much greater payoff value as a variation.

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When we get to *Adrenalin Light*, the tone shifts entirely with much more free verse and personal poems about things like being in love with another man's wife. On a wild dance floor, the speaker is thinking: "A spray / of saliva flits from your mouth to my upper lip, / I lick it, ecstatic—joy of the blood of stars . . . " The reader cringes again, certain that he doesn't know what voice or speaker he can trust here. Part of the problem could simply be the book's structure; it is far too long, with too many different voices and tones that probably span much of the author's poetic career, while simultaneously spanning as well so much human history in the poems. It's possible that Johnson, who was born in 1945, tried to fit in a lifetime of his favorite poems and then struggled to find a rubric to organize them all. It's his first book, but it wants to be a "New and Selected" one. Perhaps his editor is to blame for this, but the unfortunate consequence is that, in its weak moments, *Veins*, as a book, has too many veins trying to spread in too many directions. I suspect that the roux of Johnson's gumbo was overcooked.

Despite these problems, once the reader is able to sift out the bathetic tonal shifts, the nice poems in the book do stand out. Probably the best one is "Moorish Idol," written in rhyming couplets about a fish that's revered superstitiously by Bengalese fishermen. There's no funny accent here. The subject rings clearly through deftly handled syntax, meter, and rhyme.

> Freed, the Idol streaks below to rills
> Of coral searching for its mate.
> Its beak,
> Scissorlike, snips the growth, rejects the freak
> Intrusion of the breathless realms above—

It is pleasing and commendable, in our free verse-dominated age, that Johnson works in forms like the sonnet, blank verse, and the villanelle. Yet Johnson is often at his best in a free-verse "vein," telling us about rural Mississippi and natural things. It gives us a clearer sense of who the speaker is. The poem "Once," about a grandfather who shot an ivory-billed woodpecker because he wanted to show it to the speaker, is heartbreaking and speaks ages in one simple stroke about humanity's place in history and nature, something that Johnson's mystery tour of famous names can't quite manage.

Wilmer Mills, a widely published poet, is the author of Light for the Orphans *(Story Line Press).*

A Capital Idea . . .

Since last spring the value of the stock market has increased 50 percent. Perhaps you had the good fortune to buy stocks a year ago and are considering selling them but wish to avoid a capital-gains tax.

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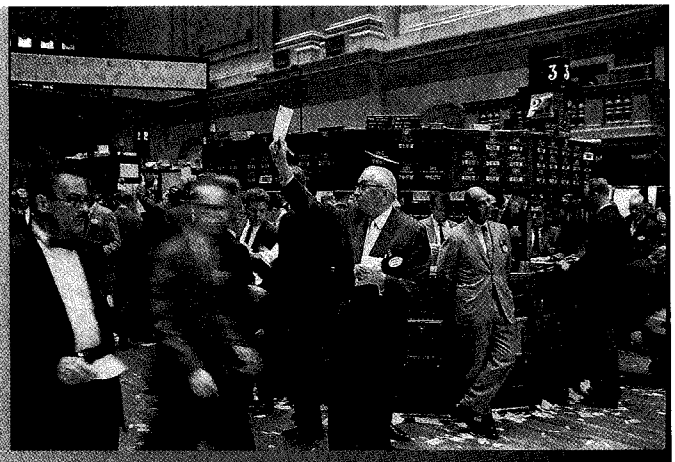

For more information, please write or call:

Christopher Check
Executive Vice President
The Rockford Institute
928 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103

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Aaron D. Wolf

Pharmaceutical Holiday

CAN YOU IMAGINE the FDA approving a drug that, say, increased the risk of blood clots, hypertension, stroke, heart attacks, breast cancer, and migraines for women? And fathom, if you will, the absurd notion that such a drug could be approved for the treatment of something that isn't even a disease, a genetic abnormality, or a mental disorder but the very way that God designed women's bodies to work.

Well, fasten your Malthusian belts, because they did. Now here's where you'd expect a very special *Dateline NBC* exposé or an investigative report from Katie Couric to unmask this conspiratorial threat to women's health. Instead, she called it "a tiny tablet that revolutionized women's health," before blasting the government for not giving it to every single woman for free.

And then the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Boston Globe*, *Time*, and all of the TV networks threw a party to celebrate its birthday.

IN THE MID-1950'S, when many American women were using Lysol to keep from having babies, Gideon Daniel ("G.D.") Searle (formerly of Metamucil fame) struck gold. Frank Colton, a researcher at his pharmaceutical company in Skokie, Illinois, had created a synthetic progesterone compound (norethynodrel), with a mind to curing "female problems." Dr. Gregory Pincus heard about it and asked for some of it to test his theories about the relationship between progesterone and the prevention of ovulation. (Lucky for him, he had money to burn, thanks to his friend Margaret Sanger and her rich pal, Cyrus McCormick's daughter Katharine.)

Pincus assembled a team led by Dr. John Rock, a Roman Catholic fertility expert who publicly rejected Church teaching on contraception, and they began experimenting on women, inducing "false pregnancies." Meanwhile, back in Skokie, Searle researchers developed their drug, reducing the amount of mestranol (estrogen) in their compound to prevent bleeding. They called it Enovid and shipped it off to Team Pincus for testing on women in Puerto Rico and Haiti.

According to Planned Parenthood, Puerto Rico was chosen because, unlike Dr. Rock's native Massachusetts, the island "had no laws against contraception." Bonus!

> Many of the women were semi-literate or illiterate, which allowed the researchers to test whether or not the pill could also be used by women around the world, regardless of their educational accomplishments.

G.D. Searle & Co. applied for FDA approval of Enovid for the treatment of menstrual problems at the same time it was organizing a symposium with Team Pincus on marketing the drug as a combined oral contraceptive. The FDA approved it for the former use in 1957, and two years later, Searle applied for the government's approval of the latter use. Enovid officially became The Pill on June 23, 1960. One year later, a million women had already used it. Four years later, Searle was up to $24 million in annual profits.

The Pill has had a side effect or two on American culture, not the least being the Sexual Revolution. In addition, writes Gardiner Harris in the *New York Times*, "in regulatory terms, the pill brought about a kind of reformation."

Because Team Pincus's tests on the Puerto Ricans had been "relatively brief," the FDA had no good reason (other than social pressure) to approve the drug for long-term use. So they slapped an arbitrary two-year limit on prescription durations. But women were so wild for The Pill that they simply asked for it under a different brand, consequences be damned.

It turned out that Pincus had ignored the evidence presented by his team which indicated that 17 percent of the illiterate women had experienced a host of side effects from chemically altering their otherwise healthy bodies—vomiting, headaches, nausea. (Pincus dismissed the women as hypochondriacs.) Added to that in the early 60's were increasing reports of pulmonary embolism, congestive heart failure, and pulmonary tuberculosis.

What to do? If the FDA pulled The Pill, women would be forced to return to sexual servitude. The answer was to order doctors to distribute literature to their prescribees containing long lists of fine print that they are free to ignore. In the name of sexual freedom, the U.S. government stood between a woman and her doctor.

TO COMMEMORATE the liberation of women, Planned Parenthood sent out a press release declaring May 9 the 50th Anniversary of The Pill, and the American media joined the celebration in lockstep. Now technically, the FDA only announced that it *had plans* to approve The Pill on May 9, 1960. But shucks, this year, May 9 fell on a Sunday, and it was Mothers' Day. ◆

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Tea Bags: A Cautionary Tale

IT ALMOST SEEMS like a dream, after all these years. Long before Barack Obama nationalized General Motors and enrolled the American people in involuntary servitude to Big Insurance and Big Pharma; before George W. Bush bankrupted the United States in a quixotic attempt to stamp out all evil and to secure the existence of the state of Israel in perpetuity; even before Bill Clinton repealed the most important parts of the Glass-Steagall Act and signed into law the Commodity Futures Modernization Act, sending the American economy hurtling downhill like a snowball headed for Hell, a doughty band of activists in Rockford, Illinois, held a tax protest, complete with the tea bags that have become a national symbol of discontent today.

There was even a tea party, organized by R.E.A.CH (Rockford Educating All Children), in which tea bags were dropped off a bridge downtown into the Rock River. Though I was, for a time, a member of the board of directors of R.E.A.CH, I wasn't present at the tea party, and I don't recall ever wearing a tea bag as a protest symbol. I was more fond of the pins that we at The Rockford Institute had made, sporting a decaying wooden sign, surrounded by weeds, on which were written the words, "Welcome to Occupied Rockford. P. Michael Mahoney, Presiding."

Magistrate Mahoney was the federal judicial dictator who controlled Rockford's public schools and the wallets of anyone who owned property within the boundaries of School District 205. By threatening to throw school-board members into jail for contempt of court, Judge Mahoney technically ensured that his judicial taxation was not without representation.

R.E.A.CH was founded to combat the federally mandated busing that was destroying neighborhood schools and to protest the unconstitutional "tort tax" that made Rockford's property taxes for several years the highest in the nation. In February 1997, The Rockford Institute and *Chronicles* joined in the battle with the publication of Tom Fleming's "Here Come the Judge" and a wildly successful rally against judicial taxation, attended by over 700 people on a cold and sleety night, at the Rockford Woman's Club.

I don't have the room here to recount all of the history, which I covered at length in these pages over the next six years. Suffice it to say that Dr. Fleming's rousing speech, and a follow-up rally a year later, helped to turn the tide, to bring more Rockfordians into the cause, and to change the make-up of the school board, until there was a four-to-three majority in opposition to the federal tyranny. Some of those members even wore their tea bags to school-board meetings.

In the end, it all made very little difference. By the time the federal Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit finally slapped Judge Mahoney down and ordered District 205 released from 13 years of judicial tyranny, two of the members of the board majority, president Patti Delugas and vice president Ted Biondo, had caved under Mahoney's threats and twice authorized more illegal taxation. Rather than focus their efforts on what they could accomplish (and what they had promised to voters)—standing up to the judge even if it meant jail time, cutting spending, and slashing the other taxes that they did control—Biondo and Delugas spent their time trying to comply with the most outlandish aspects of Judge Mahoney's desegregation plan. (Racial quotas were imposed not only on each school in the district but on each classroom, which meant that certain classes, such as calculus, had to be dropped altogether when too few minority students enrolled.)

And so June 30, 2002—the day the people of Rockford supposedly regained control of District 205—was bittersweet at best. Yes, the district buses fewer students today, but neighborhood schools have never returned. Academic achievement continues to decline, and many of the federally mandated programs, rather than being removed when the illegal taxation came to an end, were simply transferred by the administration, with the approval of the board, into the general budget.

For Fiscal Year 2003, the first year of local control, the district's budgeted expenditures were just under $270 million. For FY 2010, which ended June 30, the district's budgeted expenditures were just under $340 million—a 26-percent increase.

Over the last year, many of the grassroots protesters from a decade ago have once again pinned tea bags to their shirts. Their anger is still aimed at a federal leviathan that holds far too much control over the lives and livelihood of the citizens of the Forest City. But today, there are no taxes they can legally protest, and no local politicians they can support in an attempt to rein in federal power.

Those protesters did all the right things a decade ago, and they lost—even as they seemed to win.

It makes one wonder if perhaps those tea bags might be better used to make tea. ◆

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The End of Strong Government?

by Derek Turner

THE MAY 6 GENERAL ELECTION in England was one of the most eagerly contested in recent history. At stake were 649 parliamentary seats (one vote has been postponed because of the death of a candidate) for which there were almost 4,150 candidates. Also up for grabs were 4,222 local council seats in 164 English local authorities, and 4 mayoral seats in Greater London.

This was the first election in Britain to have featured U.S.-style televised debates between the main party leaders, and the strong performance during those debates of the Liberal Democrat leader, Nick Clegg, appeared to have made the usual two-party race into a three-party affair. There was hyperbole about "Cleggmania" and predictions that his party could wield the balance of power. A very large number of sitting MPs were stepping down (many had been implicated in a scandal over expenses), and many constituency boundaries had been redrawn, further complicating matters.

In the event, there was a hung parliament, the first since 1974—a strangely inconclusive outcome, with no clear winner or even obvious trends. The Conservatives won 306 seats (up 97, but considerably short of the 326 needed to form a parliamentary majority), Labour 258 (down 91), and the Liberal Democrats 57 (down 5, Cleggmania notwithstanding). This equates to a national vote share of 36.1 percent for the Tories, 29.1 percent for Labour, 23 percent for the Liberal Democrats, and 11.9 percent for others. There were a few high-profile casualties, most importantly Northern Ireland's First Minister Peter Robinson but also two former Labour home secretaries and several other former ministers.

Labour did much less badly than might have been expected from all the opinion polls and the dire state of public finances, with a nationwide swing away from them of just five percent. Brown was expected to lose a great deal of support from traditional Labour voters because of his gaffe in Rochdale, when a microphone he had forgotten to remove recorded him describing a lifelong Labour supporter as a "bigoted woman." Yet even this embarrassing insight into his character made little difference; he increased his own parliamentary majority, and the party won Rochdale. Either Labour's relict white working-class supporters are extraordinarily torpid, or they are simply being replaced by ethnic minority bloc voters. (Incidentally, the election saw an increase in the number of ethnic minority MPs, from 15 to 27.)

The outcome is an implicit reproach for David Cameron, whose party could not, or would not, engage with these alienated millions. Just a few months ago, the Conservatives were 26 points ahead in the opinion polls, but even before the Clegg irruption Labour had closed the gap.

Cameron has an inoffensive persona, arguably too bland for TV debates or the kind of personality-cult campaign run by Central Office, which featured his hugely magnified (and too obviously airbrushed) face on posters everywhere, alongside such vacuities as "Time for Change."

The Tories' central philosophical tenet, derived from the impressive *Red Tory* author Phillip Blond, of a Burkean "big society" in which government plays a subordinate role to communal groups is a great improvement on Thatcherism—but it never caught fire. Conservative-supporting blogs were and are filled with grumbles about why the party isn't saying more about public finances, crime, Europe, defense, political correctness, and immigration.

Cameron was probably right not to be more specific about spending cuts; any politician who had been entirely forthcoming would have been committing career hara-kiri. As Terence said, "Truth breeds hatred."

Nor, judging from the underwhelming performance of the United Kingdom Independence Party, would he have gained much traction talking about Europe (although UKIP supporters are claiming that the Tories lost in about 20 contests by roughly the same number of people as voted UKIP). But Cameron's fastidious refusal to throw any red meat to the public almost certainly prevented him from really connecting with many voters. A tougher policy on immigration, in particular, would have played well with the electorate, who raised the issue again and again during the campaign as second only to the economy on their list of concerns. But Cameron kept trying pathetically to square promises to cap immigration with continued membership in the European Union (responsible for some 80 percent of inward migration), the party's support for Turkish E.U. membership, and the continued presence on the statute book of the Human Rights Act.

The party's right wing has been made incandescent by what it sees as a missed opportunity; as the *Guardian*'s John Gray wrote on May 8, the result was "very good for the bigoted tendency." It remains to be seen whether they can become an organized caucus; their organizational track record is unpromising.

The poor performance of the Liberal Democrats reflects rather reassuringly on the discrimination of voters who may have been temporarily bedazzled by Clegg's TV

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skills but nonetheless could comprehend that behind the unobjectionable figurehead lay deeply distasteful policies, notably joining the eurozone and granting amnesty to illegal immigrants.

THERE FOLLOWED complicated maneuverings to see whether Gordon Brown or David Cameron would be first to hammer out a deal with the Liberal Democrats or some *ad hoc* combination of Democratic Unionists and Scottish and Welsh nationalists (and the Green MP, Britain's first). Throughout the campaign, Labour ministers had made persistent efforts to ingratiate themselves with the Liberal Democrats, even advising tactical voting in Tory/Liberal Democrat marginals, and they were always likelier than the Tories to agree to some kind of electoral reform, one of the Liberal Democrats' core policies. But key Labour figures were reluctant, and on May 11 it was announced that there would be a Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition, the first coalition in 65 years.

Cameron will be prime minister and Nick Clegg deputy prime minister, with Liberal Democrats also taking the roles of secretary to the treasury, business secretary, energy and climate change secretary, and Scottish secretary. The Tories made concessions—those earning under £10,000 will no longer be taxed, public-spending cuts will be scaled down, there will be fixed-term parliaments and a referendum on the Alternative Vote system. The Liberal Democrats dropped their proposed amnesty for illegal immigrants, have ruled out joining the Euro for the lifetime of this parliament, and have agreed to tax breaks for married couples and civil partnerships.

Two fringe candidacies attracted much attention. The first was in Buckingham, where the much-disliked House of Commons speaker John Bercow was being challenged by UKIP's Nigel Farage. UKIP tried hard to broaden their appeal this time, putting up more than 500 candidates, armed with a populist, right-wing manifesto that included a five-year moratorium on immigration and a ban on the burqa. But despite their efforts, and despite Farage being inadvertently in the headlines on election day after he was injured (not seriously) in a plane crash, Farage only came in third, with 17.4 percent of the vote. Nationally, the party's vote was 3.1 percent, or 917,832, some way short of the aimed-at one million. The UKIP blogosphere is abuzz with recrimination, which UKIPers have turned into an art form.

The other seat that attracted media attention was Barking and Dagenham in east London, where it was thought the British National Party's leader, Nick Griffin, might snatch the seat from Labour and the party might take the local council. But the BNP's campaign was extraordinarily inept. To add to the party's perpetual moral and material disadvantage, there were embarrassing revelations of a plan to topple Nick Griffin by the party's head of publicity—a man whom Griffin had promoted against the advice of colleagues (and who, incidentally, has threatened to kill Griffin). There were problems with the party's accounts, followed by a bizarre episode in which a jar of Marmite was used in a BNP election broadcast, not out of incompetence (the obvious inference) but as a woefully misjudged publicity stunt. The brand's owners, Unilever, naturally took out an injunction to stop the party from using it.

Then, two days before polling day, the party's webmaster closed down the BNP website and Twitter and Facebook pages. Thousands of site visitors were redirected to a statement he had written, accusing Griffin and others of incompetence, infighting, wasting money, and stealing copyrighted site content, and threatening Griffin with violence. It was a very damaging intervention at the worst possible moment.

In the circumstances, it was hardly surprising that the Labour candidate increased her majority, knocking Griffin into a poor third instead of the strong second he had expected, while all 12 local BNP councillors lost their seats. The party also lost council seats elsewhere. The only comfort it can take is that it increased its national share of the vote to 1.9 percent, a total of 514,819. For the party to do so badly in such favorable circumstances has made some members ask if Griffin can continue as leader. He may be saved purely because there is no obvious successor in a party chronically lacking in senior-level talent.

It remains to be seen how the coalition will work in practice, but the odds are that whatever administration is cobbled together will not be very long-lasting—given the internal tensions and the tough choices that need to be made. Much will depend on whether the apparently amicable Cameron-Clegg understanding can persist.

Perhaps Britain is doomed to many more such elections thanks to social fragmentation, with the country divided irreconcilably along innumerable and ever more complex fault lines—English *versus* Celtic fringes, middle *versus* working classes, whites *versus* ethnic minorities, Christian/post-Christians *versus* Muslims, urban *versus* rural, inner-city *versus* suburban, and perhaps others.

It is possible that the days of first-past-the-post voting and "strong government" have gone forever, as a growing number of Tories concede. When one considers what social fruits have been produced by this vaunted strong government, perhaps it is not worth preserving in any case. It will be painful for some Tories to accept, but perhaps the introduction of proportional representation will be the only way of ensuring that some kind of genuinely conservative voice can be heard in the torrid and tenebrous times to come.

Derek Turner is the editor of The Quarterly Review.

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Give Me That Old-Time Religion

by Joyce Bennett

IN MY 1950'S CHILDHOOD, boys and men, hair slicked down with tonic, girls and ladies in mantillas and hats primly veiled with mesh worshiped at small country churches against which lapped the green and white fields of late-summer tobacco. On Easter Sundays, prissy and full of ourselves on such a special occasion, my sister and I wore brand-new gloves and pastel dresses ballooned and swishy with crinoline and too proudly showed off our ribbon- and artificial-fruit-festooned bonnets. Descended from Maryland's earliest settlers, we were those rare birds—Catholics of English extraction. After four long decades, I was finally brought to a tearful reconciliation with my ancestral faith in spite of misgivings about the Marxist leanings of modern churchmen. And there is still for me sometimes on the Sabbath a temptation to drive over to the Southern Baptist services, because I am much more comfortable with the Baptists than with the wan contemporary Catholics I find at Mass these days (although the Baptist Church, according to Flannery O'Connor, is maybe a little too respectable for the real Catholic, who was, she insisted, not as far from her lunatic fundamentalist prophets as some of us might think).

I know that my criticisms of the present-day Church will be viewed by some as the crabbed grousings of just another rosary-praying Jansenist longing for the good old days. I have no illusions, however, about human shortcomings, and I understand that there were wrongdoers—even monsters—among the laity and clergy "way back when." But the Mystical Body endures despite Catholic hypocrites and sinners and despite the many who hate Catholicism not for what it is as much as for what it is not, to paraphrase Archbishop Fulton Sheen. Unfortunately, to accommodate those who are discomfited by "medieval" notions of sin and redemption, Catholicism in America is morphing most conveniently into Reverend Leroy's Church of What's Happenin' Now.

And a progressive Catholic hierarchy champions pet liberal causes, not the least of which is the "plight" of the immigrant. In a joint statement, the archbishops of Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Donald Wuerl and Edwin F. O'Brien, droning on about the "dignity" of "persons" and comparing the undocumented to those "most precious migrants" Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, urge that Catholics not be distracted by mere "questions of legality." They do concede that "sovereign nations have the right to control their borders" but only "provided . . . regulations promote the common good of our universal human family," whatever that might mean. No matter how nuanced their rhetoric, I believe Catholic officials could not care less about stemming the tide of illegal immigration. When America collapses economically and socially, however, who then will bankroll Catholic Charities? The left-wingers at the chancelleries fail to make the distinction between a hateful xenophobia and a healthy interest in preserving the integrity of a nation's boundaries, as they similarly fail to delineate with real clarity unjust and just war.

Designed to stifle dissent, gratuitous charges of racism from the religious or secular left will not silence some of us. America has no obligation to commit national suicide in the name of brotherhood. (I do have to wonder if parish priests would be quite as inclined to provide church-basement asylum to undocumented Unitarians as they are to hide out illegal Catholics.) The U.S. bishops' view that everyone in the world should be allowed to move to America—and why not to Vatican City?—is a manifestation of collegiate sentimentality, not Christian love, which is reason itself. I know what Jesus would do: He would, with courteous resolve, send the *ilícito* ones packing.

Even if Church leaders could make a case for open borders, feel-good big-government largesse, and forced charity, there is no way around the abortion issue for those who call themselves Catholic. While a woman who believes she has a "right to choose" is perfectly free to reject Catholicism, she has no right to demand that the Church bend to her will, genuflect to her little gods. But Catholic leaders, it seems, are only halfheartedly defending the most vulnerable among us. Just before the 2006 elections, the Maryland Catholic Conference shockingly implied that a Church-friendly Maryland General Assembly candidate need only support safer abortion clinics, parental notification before underage girls abort babies (or take "morning-after" pills), and better data collection regarding the number of abortions performed. While correctly objecting to "the asexual creation of human beings through cloning," the MCC did not condemn abortion outright, though it did in very clear terms call for the abolition of capital punishment.

An MCC 2008 survey sought to identify those congressional candidates who agreed that "Federal Policy should . . . restrict the use of taxpayer funds for abortion" and that "Federal agencies and states that receive federal funds should not discriminate against health care providers who do not perform or participate in abortions." The candidates, however, were not polled on the question of outlawing abor-

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tion. Why not?

Because Catholic officialdom offers only uneven and tepid defense of the unborn, come election day too many little old Church ladies who travel by the busload each spring to march on D.C. for the right to life mindlessly cast their ballots for pro-choice candidates. There is no point in suggesting to them that their politics are vile and not in keeping with an observance of the Fifth Commandment. They will not listen—at least not to just anyone. They might, however, heed a justifiably exercised clergy and prelacy.

Parish priests can plant little white crosses in the ground till Hell freezes over, but they will not reach the Catholics who—through ignorance or habit or defiance—continue to support legalized abortion until and unless from the pulpit they rage, rage against this blood-soaked execration. In continuing to "clarify" the issues for Catholic voters with carefully measured words, Church leaders will inexorably lead them to vote for the self-righteous left-wingers who demand justice for the marginalized but not for those in the womb. Can I get an amen?

Joyce Bennett writes from Clements, Maryland.

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Roger D. McGrath

Red Cloud's War

THE OGLALA SIOUX chief Red Cloud is generally portrayed as someone who chewed up the U.S. Army in battle after battle. He was, in the words of one author, "the first and only Indian leader in the West to win a war with the United States." This conclusion is based on the Army's decision to abandon the Bozeman Trail and the three forts that protected it after a series of battles with Red Cloud. Revisionist authors seem to delight in this—but there is something they don't mention.

John Bozeman pioneered a trail from Virginia City, Montana, the site of a gold strike in 1862, eastward through a pass that bears his name in the northern Rockies, and then southeastward along the eastern side of the Big Horn Mountains to the North Platte River. The trail quickly became the favored route for wagon and pack trains bound for the Montana goldfields. Large wagon trains were usually safe from Indian attack, but smaller ones frequently suffered from Indian depredations. This was especially true in the Powder River country at the southern end of the Big Horns. The Teton Sioux, mostly the Oglala and Miniconjou bands, considered it their private hunting grounds.

In June 1866 a peace conference was held at Fort Laramie. Several Sioux chiefs agreed to allow travel over the trail. Others, including Red Cloud, refused. Government agents were unimpressed by Red Cloud's obstinacy, regarding him as a minor chief. Their miscalculation resulted in Red Cloud's War.

Following the conference, the Army built three small forts along the trail: Fort Reno, Fort Phil Kearny, and Fort C.F. Smith. The soldiers at Fort Phil Kearny saw action almost immediately—51 Indian raids in the vicinity of the fort during the last five months of 1866. There were probably 4,000 Sioux warriors in the area, occasionally reinforced by another 2,000 Cheyenne and Arapahoe. The Army had no more than 700 soldiers stationed at the three forts. Small parties of soldiers, details of woodchoppers and the like, could usually expect an attack. They had orders not to stray too far from the forts or to chase Indians who had fired at them, a precaution to avoid being decoyed into an ambush.

On a cold December morning in 1866 a wood-chopping party came under attack near Fort Phil Kearny. Within minutes Capt. William Fetterman led a relief party of 40 infantrymen and 40 cavalrymen to the rescue. A decorated veteran of the Civil War, Fetterman had begun drinking heavily at the frozen outpost and was thoroughly frustrated by the hit-and-run tactics of the Indians. Against explicit orders not to venture beyond Lodge Trail Ridge, he pursued the Indians into the valley on the far side. He suddenly found his small force surrounded by 2,000 Oglala warriors led by Crazy Horse. Although the boys in blue made an heroic stand, killing well more than 100 Indians before running out of ammunition, Fetterman's Massacre was the result. A force of soldiers who arrived too late to help Fetterman found a grisly scene of Indian mayhem:

> Eyes torn out and laid on rocks; noses cut off; ears cut off; chins hewn off; teeth chopped out; brains taken out and placed on rocks with other members of the body; entrails taken out and exposed; hands cut off; feet cut off; arms taken out from sockets . . .

FIGHTING CONTINUED through 1867. The Hayfield Fight near Fort Smith and the Wagon Box Fight near Fort Phil Kearny were major engagements. In both battles the soldiers were outnumbered 20 to 1, but the Indians got the worse of it, losing more than 100 at each fight. Red Cloud said he lost "the flower of his warriors." The engagements clearly had a sobering effect on the Sioux. During 1868 Red Cloud and the other chiefs signed a peace treaty, giving them a large reservation in South Dakota and hunting rights in the Powder River country. Moreover, the United States agreed to abandon the forts along the Bozeman Trail. This last point is emphasized by the revisionists, while the Indian losses at the various major engagements are ignored. The uninitiated reader, typically a college student, concludes that Red Cloud was indeed victorious.

The revisionists don't mention that, by 1868, the forts and the Bozeman Trail were no longer of any great importance. The Union Pacific railroad had been built far enough west to make other routes to the Montana goldfields more practicable. The Bozeman Trail had become obsolete, something akin to the "old road" one occasionally glimpses while racing by on a modern highway. The abandonment of the forts merely gave Red Cloud a chance to save face. He moved onto the Great Sioux Reservation in South Dakota and forevermore counseled peace with the whites. Those victorious in wars aren't the ones who move onto reservations. ◆

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Calling Dr. Johnson

THE DEAR LEADER of the United States reminds me of Robert Frost's quip that a liberal is a man who won't take his own side in a fight. More precisely, his own country's side.

Barack Obama seems to hate calling anyone our enemy. It isn't nice. It's not Christian, as he understands Christianity. Well, Christ enjoins us to love our enemies. But that presupposes that we can know who our enemies are. He doesn't tell us to have no enemies, which is hardly possible.

Some people will choose to be our enemies and will often tell us so. The ancient Romans didn't pretend to be friends of the early Christians.

Christians are told to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." The founders of the American Republic had few illusions about man and government.

Freedom, they insisted, depended on "jealousy," not "confidence" or faith in rulers. They would have thought Obama foolish or cynical for demanding that we give our rulers the benefit of the doubt for good motives. Government, as they knew, is the natural enemy of liberty. They weren't hypnotized, as later generations would be, by the word *democracy*. Nor were they terribly shocked by evidence of Original Sin.

Liberal high hopes for our first black president were a hangover from the naive old belief in the Noble Savage. Obama has banked heavily on that belief. Samuel Johnson, immune to every form of ideology, never fell for such emotional rubbish: "How small, of all that human hearts endure, / That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!"

The jingoism of democracy defies reason. Frequent headlines attest that elected rulers are no more corruption-proof than any others.

Nothing seems to disillusion Obama, however. He used to teach constitutional law; but if he ever read the *Federalist*, it appears to have been lost on him. His literacy is quite superficial. He barely knows what he is saying, and he never mentions the Tenth Amendment, the key to the whole Constitution. (Even Lincoln knew that much.)

James Madison explained that the new Constitution didn't give the federal government new powers but rather "invigorated" those powers it already had under the Articles of Confederation. Obama wouldn't know what he was talking about.

Federal powers, Madison said, would be "few and defined," and those of the states, "numerous and indefinite."

Johnson opposed popular elections, on the grounds that the choice of a "rabble" had no more moral value than that of sheer chance. It isn't hard to guess what he would have thought of opinion polls and approval ratings.

Obama may be the perfect representative of a nation that no longer speaks the language of its ancestors. True, he is more fluent than George W. Bush, but both have done much to bring government into disrepute.

To dispraise Obama is by no means to praise Bush. On the contrary, Obama's presidency is the result of Bush's. Americans today grossly overvalue politics and regard political victories as substantive achievements. Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson* can put such things in proper perspective. Even Johnson's offhand witticisms reveal a mind as profound as it is hilarious.

The U.S. Constitution, as I often say, poses no serious threat to our form of government. It has roughly the same tenuous relation to our political institutions as the book of Revelation has to the Unitarian Church.

Arizona's attempt to discourage illegal immigration has exposed the huge gulf between Obama and most Americans. At the rate he is going, he seems more likely to be deported than reelected.

Like most people of both major parties, Obama takes for granted that the War Between the States ended as it should have—with slavery abolished and secession crushed. It also marked the virtual extinction of the Tenth Amendment, which George Will says is "dead as a doornail."

Was anyone very surprised when Obama's second Supreme Court nominee turned out to be a fanatical lesbian? It was quite in character for him—one more Historic First for this President without precedent. In the view of today's liberalism, there is no such thing as sexual perversion, as long as both (or all) parties give their consent. If this widespread attitude needs a name, it might be dubbed sexual bolshevism—the Playboy Philosophy with a vengeance.

Some politicians' vices become eponymous—McCarthyite, Clintonian—and it looks as if the incumbent may earn his own niche in the lexicon of invective. After one of the warmest and most hopeful welcomes any president-elect has ever received, he has quickly proceeded to disappoint and alienate the country that chose him. He evidently despises the rabble, and the feeling seems to be mutual. ◆

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Sacred Language

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

Doubtless you've read about the old days when our country was dotted with one-room schoolhouses. Well, good bishop, I am a one-man school staff: principal, teacher, tutor, and sometime janitor. My two classrooms—one doubles as a break-room and study hall—I rent from a local Presbyterian church. My students, home-educated teenagers, sit weekly at my seminars in Latin, history, and literature and then depart for home, where, depending on the requirements of the seminar, they complete four to six hours of study. Having previously taught in college, prison, public schools, a private school operated by renegade nuns, and another for middle-school girls founded by a minister who enjoyed dressing like a nun, let me assure you that, comparatively speaking, teaching home-schooled teens the intricacies of Vergil or the primitive beauty of *Beowulf* is pure bliss. My students misbehave, when they do misbehave, in the innocuous manner of their grandparents when young: chewing gum in class, sending a note to a friend, skipping their homework.

But *lingua Latina*, not my students, has hold of my thoughts today.

Last year, in the spirit of the Solemnity of Pentecost, various parishioners commemorated the day when all in the crowd could understand the preaching of the Apostles by offering up, during the Prayers of the Faithful, petitions in 12 languages ranging from Tagalog to Russian, from Vietnamese to Polish.

Sed nihil Latine.

In July 2007, Pope Benedict XVI issued a *motu proprio* (*Summorum Pontificum*) encouraging the use of the Latin Mass based on the 1962 Roman Missal. You yourself then announced that the Extraordinary Mass, as it is sometimes called, would be offered throughout our diocese, and this promise has become a reality—everywhere but here. With other vicariates now offering the Old Mass, then, I am writing to ask why we in the Asheville Vicariate have no such option. Having mentioned this deficiency to several priests without receiving an adequate reply—one retorted that no one wanted such a Mass, while another replied that no priests were qualified to offer one—I decided to write with some questions.

Has no one in the Asheville Vicariate requested the Latin Mass? If not, please consider this a request. If priestly preparation is the problem, why not return Latin to the curricula at our seminaries? After all, this ancient tongue remains the official language of the Church. Our seminarians needn't become fluent in Latin, but they could surely be taught enough to offer a Latin Mass.

Why do so many priests and lay leaders fear the Old Mass? Mention the Latin Mass to certain clerics, and they grimace as if you'd greeted them with a *Seig Heil* and the click of jackboots. What offends them? Are they frightened that the Old Mass may hold more appeal than the *Novus Ordo*, that some parishioners might prefer prayer and reflection to the glad-handing push-and-shove that passes for Mass in some parishes today?

Over the past five years, several priests and religious have made derogatory comments about the Old Mass. During his homily one priest, old enough to know better, said, "In those days the priest turned his back on the people and faced the wall." (No, in those days the priest, along with the congregation, faced Christ in the Eucharist.) A nun in civvies remarked to me, "No one back then could understand what was being said." (Could they not read? Each page of Latin was mirrored by its English translation on the opposite page.) A bishop told a group of petitioners, "No one wants the Old Mass anymore." (Allow the Mass, and you'll see the truth.)

A Latin Mass offers several benefits. Language differences today have splintered many parishes; Latin offers a chance for unity, allowing Spanish and English speakers to share a Mass with a common language. A Latin Mass might also attract more people to the Church. The use of a sacred language—Hebrew for the Orthodox Jew, Arabic for the Muslim, and, once upon a time, Latin for the Roman Catholic—appeals to a certain aesthetic in some people. Yes, yes, I know, we should be able to find God anywhere, but for many that search is better conducted in a shadowy, hushed church perfumed by candles and incense than in some bare concrete-block room smelling of Lysol and social indignation.

Finally, the Latin Mass connects us to the past, sweeps us momentarily from the mess we moderns have made of the world. The quietude of the Old Mass, the solemnity of its prayers, the opportunity for private prayer, kneeling to receive the Eucharist: These appeal to millions of Catholics around the world.

Pax tecum, bone episcope, et gratias tibi ago!

Joe Ecclesia

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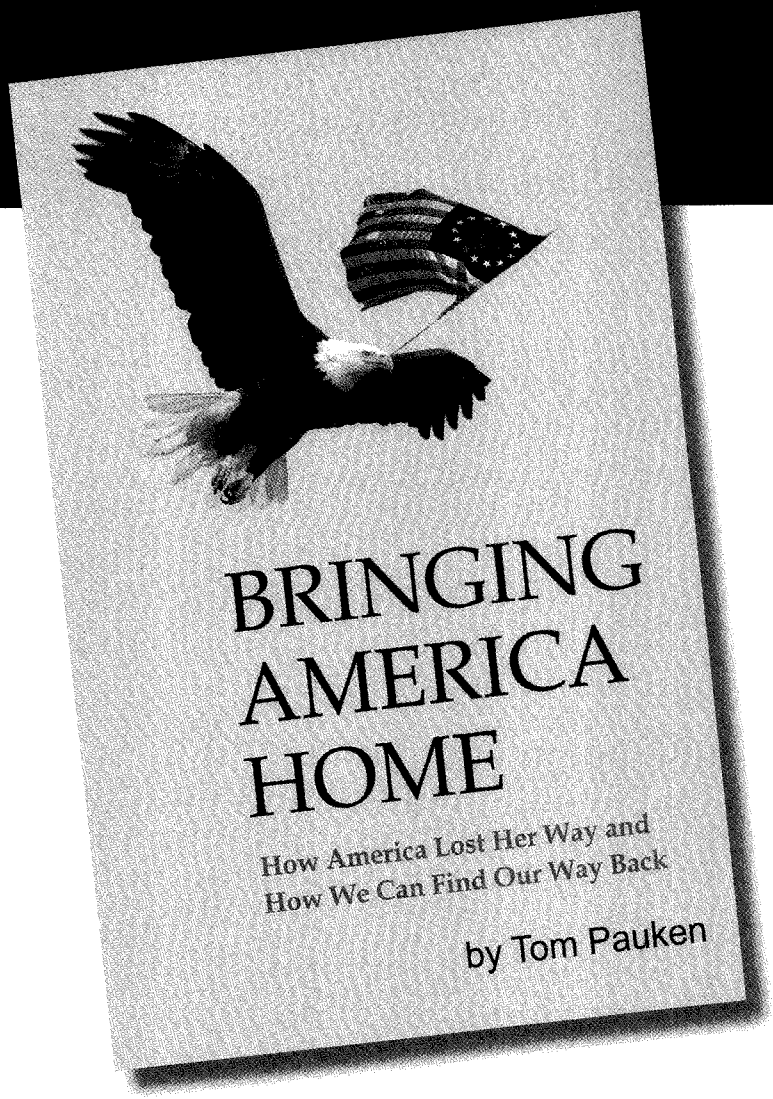

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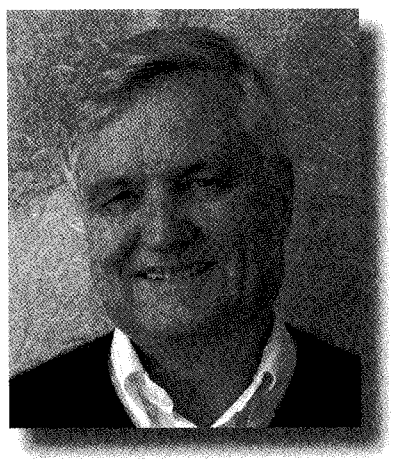
Tom Pauken, a U.S. military intelligence officer in Vietnam, served on President Ronald Reagan's White House staff. As director of the Action agency, he founded the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program and implemented Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No to Drugs" campaign.

A native Texan, small-business owner, and former state chairman of the Texas Republican Party, Tom Pauken is the author of *The Thirty Years War: The Politics of the Sixties Generation*.



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George Wallace and the Tea Party

by Tom Piatak

MANY OF THOSE seeking to understand the Tea Party movement have tried to find historical parallels, and one that has been suggested is the George Wallace movement. Both movements have comprised voters feeling that the America they grew up in is being taken from them, and their strength in the electorate is roughly comparable. George Wallace drew 13 percent of the popular vote in 1968, after polling as high as 20 percent, and the comprehensive poll of the Tea Party movement published by the *New York Times* on April 14 found that 18 percent of voters consider themselves members of the Tea Party.

But there are significant differences as well. Wallace's greatest support came from lower-middle- and working-class whites, and Wallace famously sought to defend "this man in the textile mill, this man in the steel mill, this barber, this beautician, the policeman on the beat" against "pointy-headed intellectuals," "bearded bureaucrats," "anarchists," and "lawbreakers." Thanks to decades of free trade, America now has far fewer workers in textile and steel mills (though the intellectuals and bureaucrats seem to be doing just fine), and the demographic profile of the Tea Party reflects this. Indeed, as the *New York Times* headline trumpeted, "Poll Finds Tea Party Backers Wealthier and Better Educated," with 70 percent of Tea Party supporters having at least some college education, as opposed to 53 percent of the general public, and 14 percent of Tea Party supporters having a postgraduate degree, as opposed to 10 percent of the general public. Fifty-six percent of Tea Party supporters reported a family income above $50,000 per year, as opposed to 44 percent of all Americans, and 20 percent of Tea Party supporters reported a family income over $100,000 per year, as opposed to 14 percent of the general public. Since 32 percent of Tea Party members are retired, versus 18 percent of all Americans, these income figures likely understate the degree to which the Tea Party, when compared with Americans as a whole, is better off.

In addition, the Tea Party seems somewhat indifferent to the social and cultural issues that have been an important component of American conservatism since the 1960's, even though Tea Party members are generally more conservative on those issues than is the general public. When asked to name the most important problem facing the country, 69 percent of Tea Party members point to the economy or the size of government, with only 1 percent naming such perennial concerns of the American right as immigration and abortion, and 45 percent state that reducing the size of the federal government should be the main goal of the Tea Party movement. As grave as our economic problems are, these answers suggest that the Tea Party movement is less radical than its supporters and detractors claim and than the Wallace movement was. Voicing support for libertarian economics and concern over the size of government are, after all, permissible avenues of dissent for American conservatives and increasingly the only forms of dissent permitted them. As Sam Francis argued in these pages in an essay on the legacy of Russell Kirk (*Principalities & Powers*, September 2004):

> Kirk's classical conservatism was a welcome relief from the tedious and barren libertarianism that strutted about during and after the New Deal and has since managed to thrive as the dominant ideology in the contemporary conservative mind. . . . Recognizing only one problem ("the state") and only one solution ("individual liberty"), libertarianism offers nothing to those concerned with the impending destruction of their civilization by forces that are largely irrelevant to its twin obsessions.

To their credit, many in the Tea Party do seem to be concerned about the impending destruction of our civilization, but they have yet to grasp the nature of the forces bringing about that destruction and what must be done to avert it.

The Wallace movement, despite its failure to attain power, reconfigured American politics by breaking apart the New Deal coalition. It appears likely that the Tea Party movement will bring about nothing more consequential than a second Contract With America. Far from representing an incipient Third Force in American politics, the Tea Party so far represents the militant arm of the GOP, with Tea Party members less likely than the general public to say America needs a third party. Newt Gingrich is the current political figure most admired by the greatest number of Tea Party members, and 57 percent even have a favorable view of George W. Bush. Two thirds of Tea Party members have always or usually voted Republican, 54 percent have a favorable view of the Republican Party, and an overwhelming 92 percent have a negative view of the Democratic Party. The thoroughgoing leftism of Barack Obama has certainly succeeded in reviving the GOP, but the opposition to Obama has not yet coalesced into the type of force capable of transforming American politics, much less of reviving the American nation whose continuing decline the Tea Party rightly laments.

Contributing editor Tom Piatak writes from Cleveland, Ohio.

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Regional Cinema

by Clyde Wilson

The Last Confederate
Produced by Strongbow Pictures
Directed by A. Blaine Miller
and Julian Adams
Written by Julian Adams
and Weston Adams

Firetrail
Produced by Forbesfilm
Written and directed by
Christopher Forbes

Like it or not, movies are the main art form of our time, the storytelling medium that reaches the largest audience and captures the attention of us all, high and low, wise and foolish. It is also arguable that movies, like literature and architecture, reflect something of the soul of the particular nation that produces them. If so, we indeed need to be concerned about the American soul.

Until the late 60's, our cinema—whether contemporary or costume drama, comedy, Western, or war film—reflected a general baseline of Middle American values. It was not usually great art, but it was consoling entertainment and a source and reflection of a national consensus. And it portrayed with sympathy the real "diversity" of this far-flung Union—New England, the Big Apple, the Old South, the Midwest, and the West.

The catastrophe known as the 60's—marked by a collapse of morals, political fanaticism and violence, multiculturalism, and the ever-tighter centralized control and enforced uniformity of all phases of life by the bicoastal elite—coincided with the degradation of American cinema. Now we have godless nihilism and self-indulgence, violence for violence's sake, every form of sexual promiscuity, filth for the sake of filth, and "creativity" generally limited to technological fantasy, sequels, prequels, dramatization of comic books, and rip-offs of European and Japanese stories. The masters of our multicultural monoculture have little talent but plenty of power and money, and our cinema now reflects their minds and souls.

This is not the whole picture, of course. There are still "independent" productions that portray actual American people and situations and that manage to come to public attention. It is not difficult to produce a good book or a good movie. The problem is getting anyone to hear about it and finding a distributor. The mass media seldom reflect anything but the works our masters want to be celebrated and the absence of those works they want to be censored or ignored. All you need to remember is the reception given Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* and Ron Maxwell's historical epic *Gods and Generals*.

Amazingly and refreshingly, two excellent new and old-fashioned films, *Firetrail* and *The Last Confederate*, have appeared close together and are available on DVD. They doubtless have faced and will face the distribution problem, but they give a comforting indication of what American cinema could be if it were decentralized and reflected the true "diversity" of what is left of our real country. Real American culture has always been regional, for that is the only way that our vast Union can be fairly represented and where remnants of the real America are still to be found.

Both of these films deal realistically and movingly with an unfashionable subject—the experiences of the people of South Carolina in the winter of 1865, when they became victims of the first large-scale American exercise of total war (something which is still denied by establishment historians but can be proved a thousand times over by the documents of the time). General Sherman's March is even yet regarded in some quarters as a great feat of arms and military genius. Actually, it involved little war other than skirmishes with outnumbered cavalry and home guards and was a calculated destruction of the means of civilian life—houses, private valuables and heirlooms, food, barns, crops, livestock, schools, churches, convents, whole towns. The high point was the deliberate torching of the surrendered and occupied city of Columbia, previously admired for its loveliness.

Both movies are products largely of regional inspiration and regional talent on both sides of the camera and reflect genuine regional memory, a thing rare in America and even rarer in the movies. Even some critics who have boggled at "nostalgia" for Southern traitors and slavers have acknowledged that the films carry a great deal of "authenticity." Indeed they do. As renderings of historical experience they are faithful and subtly artistic. Costumes, action, dialogue, and personalities carry conviction as a representation of the real historical experience of certain Americans. Those audiences who have viewed these films in limited release have been enthusiastic.

Firetrail is produced by independent filmmaker Christopher Forbes and is based on the 2005 romance novel by "Lydia Hawke," though it rises far above

Julian Adams in *The Last Confederate* ©Solar Filmworks

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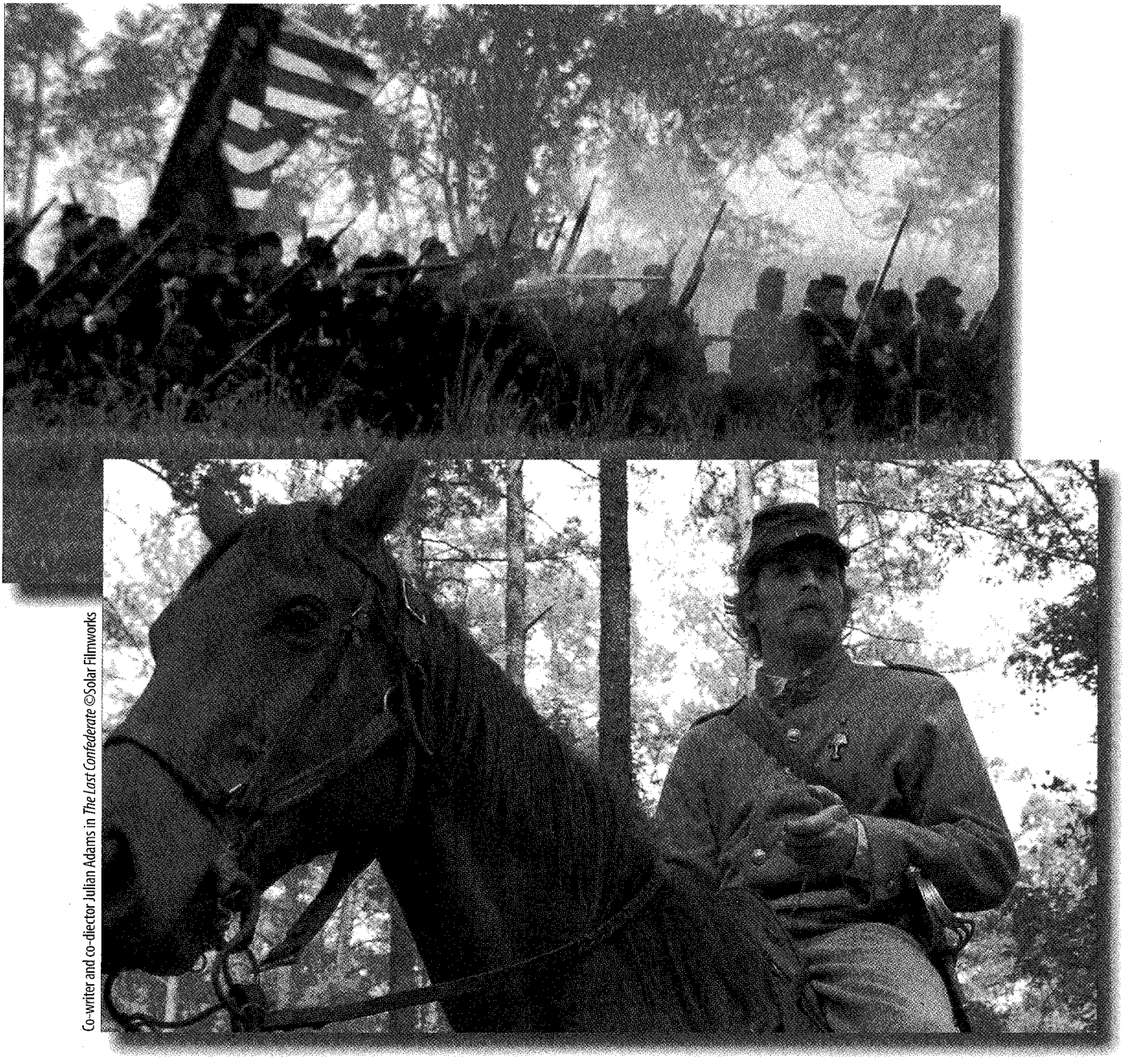
that genre. The chief actors—Tripp Courtney and Jim Hilton as Confederate soldiers and Lin Laffitte as a beleagured lady—are natives of the region, relatively unknown but with some "mainstream" film experience. They are excellent. So is the music from the Southern Rock group Beaver Creek.

The Last Confederate covers the same territory with similar virtues of authentic environment and native actors. Written and directed by Julian Adams, it is based on the experiences of his ancestors, Confederate Capt. Robert Adams and his Northern bride Eveline McCord. These parts are played with skill by Julian Adams and Gwendolyn Edwards. I am a little, just a little, less enthusiastic about *The Last Confederate* than I am about *Firetrail.* The title *The Last Confederate* is inappropriate, there is too much genealogical pride, and Tippi Hedren and Mickey Rooney have needlessly been corralled in for small parts.

Some good news and a warning. The good news is that those responsible for both films have in production other projects in the same vein. The warning: Contemporary manners-challenged Americans might find the dialogue a little slow and stilted. But it captures truly the times and people portrayed. In those days they understood what George Garrett has written: that manners are a recognition that our fellow human creatures, all of them, are made in the image of God.

Contributing editor Clyde Wilson is the author of Defending Dixie.



Battle Scene from *The Last Confederate* ©Solar Filmworks

Co-writer and co-director Julian Adams in *The Last Confederate* ©Solar Filmworks

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The Demise of Human Understanding

by Claude Polin

WHO IN MODERN WESTERN SOCIETY has not heard of that category of citizens honorably known as intellectuals? They profess to be the thinking part of the nation, the people whose special calling is to ponder public or private matters. Not possessed of a particularly low opinion of themselves, they even lay claim to a spiritual power forfeited, in their eyes, by all former clerics.

I would like to set the record straight.

THERE WAS A TIME when most people believed that the world was ruled by some transcendental Reason (the Stoic creed), or that it was not only ruled but created by that Reason (the Christian Faith). So it was only natural that those who were deemed to have some access to its designs be revered and ranked among the most useful officers of the commonwealth. This was the case in all Western societies for centuries: Philosophers (or theologians) were the keystone of society.

But then a cataclysm occurred, which in three centuries, from the 16th to the 18th, wiped out all but traces of the previous civilization. Whatever its causes (which range from the development of trade to the Reformation), this upheaval amounted to a stark denial either that there might be a sort of ideal blueprint for men to follow in their acts or in their thinking or, if there was, that it be their lot to know it.

But this meant the death knell had tolled for philosophy and theology, at least such as they had been known. Of what use was human reason if there was no reason at work behind observable phenomena, or if man no longer had the means to decipher it?

I think there were basically two answers, which I shall call the pragmatists' and the intellectuals'.

THERE IS SOMETHING STRIKING about the Anglo-Saxon mentality: It amounts to thinking man may be a God-forgotten animal, but not a godless one. By committing sin, men forfeited their God-given nature but not their capacity for faith in God's love—a dual assessment of man's nature that obviously bears Calvin's diluted but distinctive trademark. The very fact that men can take such a pessimistic view of themselves, that they may be so utterly aware of their sinful condition, bears testimony to their belief both in God's existence and in their inability to understand His will.

Hence a natural propensity among such men to give up their dream of a perfect society while at the same time striving to live the life that God gave them, without trying to transform it into a life of delights, but also without deploring being forced to live it. The next-best society to a perfect one is one in which the citizens try to obey the commandments of God (though they don't understand them) but are not loath to build lightning rods, telephones, trains, or establish savings banks. Or devise laws to protect the honest citizen and punish the evildoer.

In other words, there is hardly any room in such an intellectual climate for any other use of human reason than as a tool to make the best of things as they seem to be (only God knowing what they mean) and of men as they are (since they cannot be as they should). Reason in this world means utilitarian rationality. Men infused with more or less articulate, or diluted, Calvinism will be outstanding engineers, craftsmen, or careful managers of their properties and businesses, eager for past experience, or wise and learned legislators, wary of sheer novelty, bent not on creating perfect citizens but on maintaining a balance between their actual different interests: They will be poised pragmatists.

WHAT TOOK PLACE in the world that had renounced Catholicism without becoming Protestant is altogether different. The Calvinist inspiration maintains an absolute faith in God (or in God's love for mankind) even as it assesses that men's sin has made God's will totally unintelligible to them. Man's freedom tends to be an ordered one. But in the formerly Catholic Europe, the offensive against Christianity was pushed to its logical outcome: the pure and simple demise of religion. From Machiavelli's Renaissance to Diderot's Enlightenment, atheism spread through Europe until the French Revolution made it acceptable. So what then confronted man was the possibility to create a world anew, to recreate man himself: Man had chosen to play God.

On what was the new world order based? The answer depends on what is left in man when he refuses to see himself as part of God's world and forfeits his *pars divina*. It is a matter of simple subtraction: If one dissociates man's freedom from God's imperatives, what remains is man's unqualified and absolute freedom. And this freedom cannot be but each man's total freedom, for the reference to an essence of a free man presupposes a model of humanity that each man must follow to be free. What is left is subjective freedom, the freedom of each individual man to "obey only himself," because he is "an absolute, a naturally independent being," "a perfect and solitary whole," in Rousseau's exemplary words. In a nutshell, the axis around which the *novus ordo seclorum* began revolving is the sovereignty of the self (the ego), its basic principle that each man considers himself his own god.

That this is indeed the case is fairly obvious to anyone bothering to skim over

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the most famous philosophical systems devised in modern Europe.

The only topic of Montaigne's essays is, in his own words, himself, and his only aim is to "*jouir loyalement de son être*," to "*être tout à soi*," ("loyally enjoy one's being" and "be entirely devoted to oneself"). Descartes's *Discours de la Méthode* begins with the claim that there is only one science worth anything, "the one which is inside me." I have just mentioned Rousseau's utter self-idolatry. The economists' rendition of man, like Hume's or Smith's, is that of a rather self-centered being who relates to his fellow man at the most through inner, subjective sympathy. Subjective feeling is for Kant the only basis of religious beliefs. Romanticism revels in the intricacies and the self-centered suffering of one's heart. Anarchists like Stirner proclaim each man to be unique and entitled to exclusive ownership of himself, while Nietzsche applauds the individual who is not afraid to stand alone above the crowd. Freud stresses the sovereignty of a hidden inner-self. Socialism starts with the rantings of Fourier, devising a society that would put each individual's passions to use. Marx, in his wake, dreams of communism as that stage of human progress in which every individual can expect to be fully himself, whereas in the meantime he exonerates each individual for his own failures. Marx's dream was revived by hippies and radicals like Reich and Marcuse, indicting the bourgeois leveling of individualities. The more one thinks of it, the more modernity sounds like a hymn to the absolute originality and value of one's own ego and the virtues of being one's own self. One might be tempted to include Christianity also, since every man was created by God as a unique person. A Christian world, however, is one whose perfection results from each man's intimate knowledge that his uniqueness is meant for the perfection of the whole; it has nothing to do with a world that is only the sum total of parts nobody knows how to combine, and God least of all.

IT THEN BECOMES POSSIBLE to understand this new kind of Western cleric, the intellectual. Being one is not to deny that man's intellect may be put to scientific use—the discovery of means of action—after the prevailing manner of Protestant countries. But the modern intellectual was born when it became difficult to conceive of any other use at all for human intellect. Not only is there no design of God's to discover anymore, but, each being a god unto himself, there is very simply not much to say, beyond the study of man's animal or physical being, about man or man's behavior, and particularly no way to judge it. So what is left for people who are no scientists but claim to understand what is going on in human affairs? They face a simple alternative: Disappear or go along with the consequences of the new creed they have partly initiated, and in any case enthusiastically supported—the religion of the ego.

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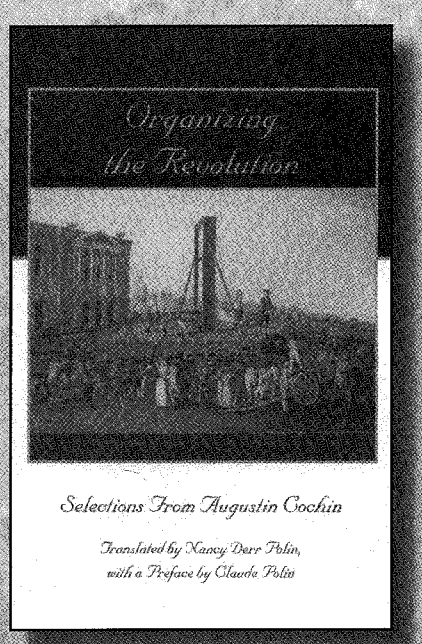
Organizing the Revolution
Selections From Augustin Cochin
Translated by Nancy Derr Polin, with a Preface by Claude Polin

Organizing the Revolution

Selections From Augustin Cochin

translated by Nancy Derr Polin

Preface by Claude Polin

Augustin Cochin (1876-1916) undertook a minute analysis of the role that provincial clubs and societies played in the genesis of the French Revolution. His work shows clearly how the revolution was organized long before the events of 1789. This translation is an attempt to present his unfinished writings in a clear and coherent form.

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Which means all that is allowed in the way of thinking is to eliminate all possible restraints on the sovereignty of the ego. These restraints can be material, of course (a good reason to be "the master and owner of nature," in Descartes's words), but even more crucial are those of a moral and spiritual nature. Even though they may not all have fully realized it, under the flag of freedom and the battle cry of liberation of all mankind from all oppression, the intellectuals had willy-nilly embarked on a crusade against all restraints to the fulfillment of the ego's supposed or real potential, whether it be whims, passions, desires, interests, *etc.*—in other words, against all norms, against the very idea that there might be something beyond the limitless subjective will of the ego. By assuming the individual was "a perfect and solitary whole" they had doomed themselves to equating thinking with criticizing a world that by definition is not the ego's, and therefore is a constant source of dissatisfaction to it. Goethe would have defined the modern intellectual as "the spirit who always says no."

Let us list a few of the most famous of these restless, wandering, cosmopolitan antinomians.

Montaigne's prevailing and only preoccupation is to deny there may be any universal or eternal norm. "*Que sais-je*" ("What do I know") is his motto, and skepticism his doctrine. Descartes denies the worth of all ideas except mathematical (utilitarian) ones. Spinoza claims it is as natural to be a criminal as not to be one. Voltaire, and behind him all the French Enlightenment, denies belief in truth (like the Catholics') to be anything but fanaticism. Montesquieu denies there is any universally valid political regime, while Rousseau denies even democracy, which is for him the only legitimate one, to be fit for men. ("It demands a people of gods.") Kant denies man can have any insight into the nature of things, and so will all idealists after him. The French revolutionaries deny there are men who know better than others (kings or aristocrats, in particular). Romantics deny the worth of anything that does not stem from each individual's heart. Marx (and with him all socialists) deny the legitimacy of all supposedly objective ideas, including of course bourgeois values. His anarchist siblings, such as Bakunin, deny the legitimacy of any organizing principle for men to live together, and Stirner the value of anything that does not stem from the self. Freud denies the validity of all human thinking, since it is subjected to the omnipotent irrationality of the subconscious. André Breton and the surrealists deny common-sense reality. Heidegger and the existentialists deny that there is any sense or essence of things. Even the modernist Catholic Church refrains from mentioning the sinful condition of man!

But, mind you, beyond the criticism, what do they propose? Nothing. These denials are the gist of doctrines whose single underlying purpose is the ego's slaking of its unquenchable thirst for being whatever it feels like being. Hence their latest output: a "culture" obsessed with the fulfillment of the self (the Me Generation), whose prevailing slogans display nothing but negativity. Permissiveness speaks for itself. Feminism is the refusal to acknowledge an insuperable difference between the sexes, and homosexuality the denial that there are only two. Abortion is the affirmation of the superior right of the ego (of the mother) over the right of any other human being. Drug addiction is an open sesame to limitless (if illusory) subjective freedom and power, or to happiness through total immersion in oneself. Behind antiracism there is the dream of Marx's generic man or Freud's polymorphic pervert, the universal half-breed with no particular nature to accomplish, the man who is a total man for the simple reason that he is a nondescript one, comprising all possible features of all possible men. (He is also the perfect consumer. The intellectual unwittingly works for the multinationals.) And finally, what is democracy if not society turning the individual into a sovereign, a person entitled to consider legitimate the idea that his fellow citizens are his subordinates? Does tolerance stem from a respect for the other, or does it constitute a claim for each to have the right to be what he wants to be? Are the famous Rights of Man the rights of others, or the self's rights (as appears in the right of the mother to kill her baby)? No wonder the intellectuals of our day increasingly comprise narcissistic filmmakers and actors, pretentious journalists, mediocre writers, second-rate academics, self-professed artists or gurus: To violate taboos is the only feat required to be hailed as a remarkable mind. Whereas inquiring into what may be the nature of things or of man is the only intellectual activity (typically conservative) that deserves to be called thinking.

By encouraging men to forget what they should be, the intellectual debases them all.

Is this much ado about nothing? Certainly, were it not that the typical intellectual of our times flatters the average citizen's animal propensity to think of himself as the center of the universe. Which makes the intellectual a regular plague. By encouraging men to forget what they should be, he debases them all, as he makes each one the potential enemy of the others. He should not be forgiven, even though he does not know what he is doing.

Corresponding editor Claude Polin is a professor at the University of Paris-Sorbonne.

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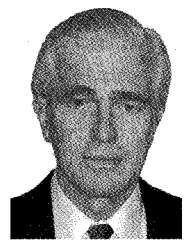
Robin Hood
Produced and distributed by Universal Pictures ♦
Directed by Ridley Scott ♦
Screenplay by Brian Helgeland



A Proto-Puritan Robin

SINCE HIS EARLIEST APPEARANCES in folk ballads of the 13th century, Robin Hood has been a slippery fox of a hero. He's a man who thumbs his nose at the powerful while going his merry way aiding the powerless. To this day, the King Johns and Nottingham sheriffs the world over fume at his impudent exploits and hurl interdictions at his spritely, elusive form. But to no avail. The outlaw of Sherwood Forest can no more be captured than can a will-o'-the-wisp.

There will always be a Robin, especially on the movie screen, which has become a second home as natural to him as Sherwood. Robin has appeared in over 80 films. He ranks with Tarzan and Jesse James in his wide popular appeal, and this explains why he has been so cinematically successful. The economics of film—big-budget film, anyway—require that productions draw audiences in the hundreds of millions if they are to be profitable. The best way to guarantee attendance in these numbers is to feature heroes with whom the masses can gladly identify. Given the choice between a Louis Auchincloss boardroom patrician and a Raymond Chandler mean-street habitué, a filmmaker knows where to place his bet.

In short, since Robin Hood appeals to everyone who has ever felt stymied or abused by those in power, his demographic, as the marketers would say, is virtually boundless. He's the perfect film hero.

In his new adaptation of the ancient legend, Ridley Scott has kept this firmly—too firmly—in mind. While almost all film incarnations of the rascally hero have invoked the class antagonism implicit in the original stories, Scott has done more than invoke: He's pounded it home. And that's where his film's problem begins. Obsessed with his message of class strife, Scott and his favorite actor, Russell Crowe, have squeezed the fun out of the story by treating it with a seriousness that at times borders on the looney.

IN THE FIRST 15 MINUTES of the film, we meet Richard the Lionheart (Danny Huston), that famously un-English English king who, by some accounts, spent no more than a few months on English soil, not that you would know that from this or any of the other films that celebrate him. Scott's Richard is making his way home from the Third Crusade, but he has stopped at the Château de Châlus-Chabrol, a castle in Normandy, so he can sack it both for his amusement and to recoup the funds he's squandered in Jerusalem. As his archers unleash a storm of arrows at the defenders manning the ramparts above, a French cook appears on the walkway behind the castle's parapet. He is bringing a bucket of soup to his beleaguered warriors, who have been busily returning a fusillade of their own on the English below. "Get your soup, get your soup," he calls out amid the fletching. With Gallic *sang-froid*, these fellows refuse to forego their luncheon because of a military inconvenience. They have their principles, after all. When one of the castle's defenders falls to an English arrow, the others carry on with their meal. The cook takes up the abandoned bow, notches an arrow, and, without taking much aim, sends it flying. *Thunk*: It goes right through Richard's neck. Seeing this, the cook does a little dance to celebrate such a felicitous regicide. More than two hours later in this long film, another commoner will shoot another arrow through another aristo's neck to the unparalleled jubilation of a cast of plebeian thousands.

In between these blows against the privileged, we watch other instances of class difference being dispelled. Robin (Crowe) and his men disguise themselves in the armor of dead knights in order to pass for nobles. When one of his followers raises fears that their imposture may be discovered, Robin assures him in fine egalitarian tones, "There's no difference between a knight and any other man but what he wears." Nonetheless, he will shortly find himself frostily hosted by a knight's widow, the doughty Marian (Cate Blanchett), who makes him sleep on the floor outside her bedroom in the company of her hounds. Her father-in-law, Sir Walter Loxley (Max von Sydow), has decided that Robin should be passed off as his dead son (and, thus, Marian's husband). This stalwart, he reasons, will be able to defend their land and Marian's honor from the designs of the wicked Sheriff of Nottingham, for Robin now carries the Loxley family's sword, engraved with their commitment to democratic revolution: "Rise and rise again, until lambs become lions." (Sounds a bit too 1776 for the 13th century, doesn't it?)

For her part, Marian has doubts about Robin's designs. "If you so much as touch me," she chillingly warns him, "I'll sever your manhood." Just to show he's not

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too uppity, Robin later joins her peasants plowing and seeding her fields. But when he discovers that his long-dead father had been a visionary stonemason with a bent for political philosophy, all bets are off. About 1160, it seems, Robin's dad concocted a proto-Magna Carta that would find its more lapidary form in 1215. Robin likes the early version so much that he defiantly proposes its virtues to the notorious tax-gouger King John. Upon hearing the charter's stipulations regarding the rights of men (in a rare deference to history, Scott's scriptwriter, Brian Helgeland, doesn't mention women's rights), John scoffs, "Would you have me build every man a castle?"

Robin responds blandly, "Every Englishman's home *is* his castle." The commoner onlookers go wild with democratic glee. I wonder if at the time the fettered among John's subjects would have joined in so lustily. They weren't slated to get much out of the charter. Few of them would have understood it at all.

Populism was the theme of previous Robin Hood productions, but they usually kept the proto-proletarian dynamic in check. In Douglas Fairbanks' *Robin Hood* (1922) and Michael Curtiz's *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), Robin was a noble. Curtiz made Errol Flynn's Robin a minor sort of baronet until the very end, when good King Richard returns and elevates him a goodly number of ranks and grants him the right to marry Olivia de Havilland's Maid Marian. It was an ending meant to bring Robin the outsider back within the precincts of civilized decorum. (Speaking of which, I am reminded of an anecdote Miss De Havilland related in an interview she gave in the 1970's. In a bid to add verisimilitude to their performances, Flynn had tried to convince the 19-year-old that they should practice the marriage act in their off-hours. De Havilland asked Flynn if he weren't already married. He stammered, well, yes, but he was going to get a divorce at the first possible moment; she laughed and politely turned down the Australian roué.)

Unlike Curtiz's Robin, Scott's is still on the outs when we see him last. In fact, he has arrived at the starting point of Curtiz's film, and Scott ends with a title card reading "The Legend Begins." We know what that means.

Crowe makes a fine commoner brimming with righteous anger at royal injustices. He's dour, stolid, and gruff. His hair is shorn short in Roundhead fashion, betokening his seriousness. He might almost be a proto-Puritan plotting revolution, so glumly determined does he seem as he lumbers about. Although his followers display some liveliness now and then, this Robin is decidedly not the merry fellow of the ballads, and Crowe is not the man for this role. You only have to imagine how ridiculous he'd look if, instead of going hatless as he does, he had worn Flynn's bright green cap and pheasant feather on his round head. The one sure accomplishment of Scott's film is that it reveals how inspired Curtiz's version was and how perfectly Flynn inhabited the role. Flynn's characteristic stance in scene after scene is to stand apart from others, hands on hips, arms akimbo, as he laughs delightedly at whatever foolery has just transpired, whether it's the dastardly Sir Guy (a wonderfully hammy Basil Rathbone) seething at having been forced to don peasant's garb, or his own discomfiture at the hands of Little John, who gives him the famous lesson in wielding a staff on a log bridge, a scene that Scott oddly ignores.

Then there are the companion scenes that open and close Curtiz's film. In the first, Robin confronts King John in his own castle. He sits lounging insouciantly before the king's table, one leg thrown over his chair's arm, as he casually indicts the king for his many wrongs. John quietly signals his retainers, and they circle and pounce on the impudent Robin. As they reach down for their prey, he slips from underneath their clumsy arms, wrests a sword from a bewildered knight, and begins to make his nimble escape. Curtiz echoes this scene in the final minute of his film. King Richard rewards Robin by performing an impromptu marriage for him and Marian. After the ceremony, the former outlaw, now turned loyal vassal, and his new wife are surrounded by his cheering followers, who soon grow baffled when they realize the couple seems to have disappeared mysteriously from underneath them. They and the king look round the royal court and discover Marian and Robin have slipped away to the hall's great doors, where they turn and salute their friends before running off. These scenes perfectly express the nature of Robin Hood. He's a spontaneous, mercurial fellow, unbound by protocol and propriety, a free spirit whose purpose is to remind his audience that those who oppress others are inherently ridiculous and, with luck, can be overcome with daring and good humor. Naive, certainly, but nevertheless tonic, especially so in 1938 during the Depression and on the eve of the war. This timing may explain the partial paradox of making Robin a noble. Left-leaning Curtiz, a Jewish Hungarian émigré, surely looked to the aristocratic Franklin Delano Roosevelt as the Robin who would save Europe from the Nazis.

I don't mean to say that Scott's film is a failure when compared with Curtiz's. It has many interesting features. Its recreation of the look and texture of medieval life is quite convincing. The grim, rudimentary buildings and halls, the dirt and noise, the muddy fields, the soiled clothing—it all looks genuine. When Marian is forced to help Robin out of the chain mail and underclothing that he hasn't removed for months, you can almost smell the odor she has to endure. The direction and acting aren't bad. It's just that Scott's Robin has nothing much to do with the quicksilver charm of the legendary figure whose name he so unaccountably bears. ◆

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Taki Theodoracopulos

Going Greek

My birthplace has been in the news lately—this time not for tragic plays, philosophy, or wartime gallantry, but for cheating. In cahoots with Goldman (Ali Baba) Sachs, the Greeks cooked the books, took E.U. money, and ran. Once caught, they rioted and even managed to murder a pregnant woman who—unlike the rioters—was working at her bank desk. "What is wrong with you Greeks?" asked a friend of mine. "Can't you play by the rules?" Well, er, no, not really. Here is a brief historical background so we can understand why Greeks in general, and Greek governments in particular, cheat.

After the glorious centuries of antiquity, the Greeks became an integral part of the Eastern Roman Empire with its opulent capital, Constantinople, founded in A.D. 330 by the emperor Constantine.

Constantinople lasted until 1453, when Sultan Mehmed II and his Ottoman Turks captured and sacked the city. Four hundred years of Turkish domination followed, and with it came most of the ills that have plagued modern Greece: civil disobedience, distrust of authority, and a lack of political maturity.

Modern Greece was founded in 1830, after nine years of revolutionary struggle against the Turks. Britain, Russia, and France assisted the revolutionaries, but the new government struggled from the start. Today, 180 years later, Greece is still out there begging for money from Germany and France. Why? Greek intellectuals and historians have generally blamed the 400-year Turkish occupation for the nation's ills. And it is a fact that, where humiliation persists through several generations, the oppressed begin—in defense of their own dignity—to imitate their oppressors. The cruelty, vindictiveness, and harshness shown by the warring political factions testify to this theory.

Mind you, the volatility of the Greek character, probably the only remaining link to the glorious past of antiquity, is another factor. The highly individualistic Greek is too self-seeking to submit easily to the dictates of others. His unruliness has helped him to survive centuries of oppression and to rise above adversity, economic or otherwise. But it has also made him unaware of the advantages of communal spirit and true democratic attitudes. There is nothing of the Swiss village-level democratic system in Greece. The Greek will vote for anyone who promises to help him screw his fellow man. It is as simple as that, however awful it may sound. The Greek will go to any lengths to attain his goals, not hesitating to lie and cheat. This has created a climate in which cheating is a way of life, and in which the highest and lowest citizens do not hesitate to use dishonesty, especially where politics are concerned.

A direct result of this way of life has been the "spoils system." Although not a Greek invention, nowhere has it been practiced more assiduously than in Greece. Succeeding governments have shamelessly brought in their favorites, returning favors and expecting new ones, and changing laws to suit their purposes, thus encouraging resentment, divisiveness, and a "wait-until-my-turn-comes" way of thinking.

The latest crisis was inevitable. One in three Greeks works for the state, and Greece is known for having the worst civil servants in Europe, if not the civilized world. How can civil servants with a 14-month-per-year salary and a retirement age of 50 be striking as I write? Most have phantom jobs and simply collect their salaries or pensions every month. But politicians award civil-service jobs to unqualified people in order to gain votes. It is a vicious cycle that gets more vicious as time passes.

The social contract between state and citizen has never worked in Greece because it was never put into effect. The state did not fulfill its responsibilities, and the citizen, in return, went his own way in order to survive. But the Greek is sly and has survived since time immemorial. Today, he knows that the European Union pretends to be rescuing Greece but in reality is rescuing German and French banks that hold Greek bonds. While the unions are demonstrating and street fighting has broken out, expensive four-wheel-drive SUVs are choking the roads to the beach. Everyone, it seems at times, has a second home in the countryside and a flat in Athens. I just wish to warn the Americans, who are going Greek as I write: Deficits will get you nowhere except to the poorhouse.

Yet the lying persists. George Papandreou, the prime minister, came to power demanding higher wages and shorter hours for civil servants. Now he tells Thomas Friedman, a cheerleader, that the civic revolution he proposes will have an emphasis on stimulating private initiative and decreasing the incentives that focused too many Greeks on getting a lifetime government job.

Has the old socialist zebra changed its stripes? Don't bet on it. The German cow is there to be milked by the thirsty Greeks. ◆

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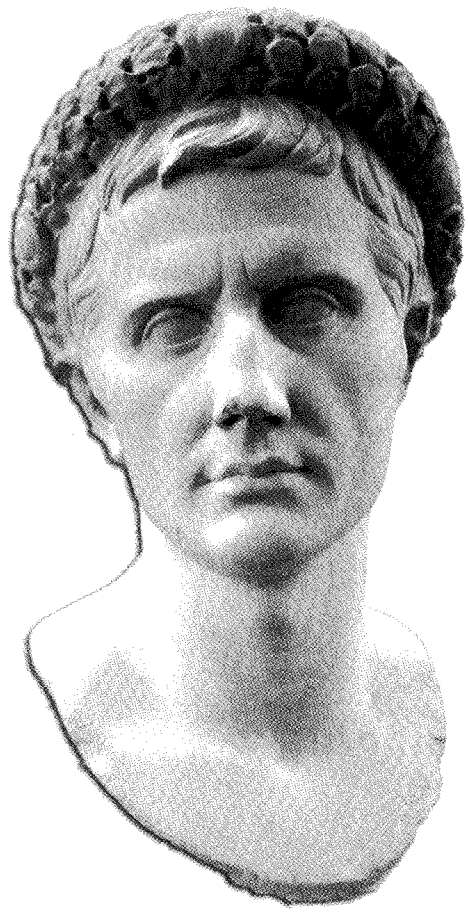

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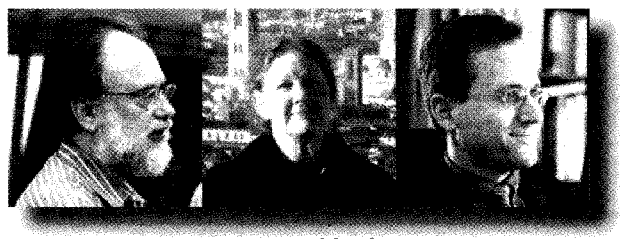

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